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ABSTRACT

This publication addresses many of the complexities of violence, and provides information to prepare educators and parents to combat violence in schools and communities. The chapters are: (1) "How Educators, Students, Parents, and Law Enforcement Officials See School Violence" (Rose M. Duhon-Sells and Halloway C. Sells); (2) "Addressing School Violence through an Understanding of Gangs and Gang-Related Behaviors" (Vera Inez Daniels and Theodore Pikes); (3) "Curbing Violence: A Challenge for the Nation's Schools" (Elton C. Harrison); (4) Family Violence and the Schools (Victor C. Kirk); (5) "Identification of Various Levels of School Violence" (Alfred D. Frederick); (6) "Variations in Violence" (Gwendolyn M. Duhon-Haynes, Harry Albert, and Alice Duhon-Ross); (7) "Governmental Initiatives To Reduce Violence in the Schools" (Leon R. Tarver, II); (8) "School Violence: Preparing Preservice Teachers" (Patricia J. Larke and Norvella P. Carter); (9) "Disarming Our Children: What Every Parent Can and Should Do" (Lanier Cordell); (10) "What We Can Do about Gangs" (Mary Lynn Cantrell); (11) "Techniques for Reducing School Violence" (Mary M. Addison and Dolores A. Westmoreland); (12) "Mediating Power Struggles between Students" (Allen N. Mendler); (13) "Nourishing the Sense of Self in School-Age Children in an Effort To Stop Violence in Schools" (Emma Thomas Pitts); (14) "Students as Conflict Resolvers in Schools: Two Models that Work" (Cynthia L. Jackson and Luis C. Hines); (15) "Critical Thinking as a Conflict Resolution Strategy" (Jacqulin Sensley Jacobs and Roy L. Jacobs, Sr.); (16) "Resolving School Conflicts through Appropriate Multicultural Education Programs" (Calvin Walker, Preston Dinkins, and Jane W. Robinson); (17) "Restoring Human Dignity: A Model for Prevention and Intervention" (VerJanis A. Peoples and Gerald C. Peoples); and (18) "Reducing School Violence: Resources To Assist Teachers" (Patricia J. Larke, Comp. and Norvella P. Carter, Comp.). Chapters contain references. (SLD)

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Safe and Drug-Free Schools
Baldwin County Board
of Education

Dealing with Youth Violence: What Schools and Communities Need to Know

Rose M. Duhon-Sells
Editor

National Educational Service
Bloomington, Indiana

Safe and Drug-Free Schools
Baldwin County Board
of Education

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ABOUT THE EDITOR

Dr. Rose M. Duhon-Sells, the 1993 President-Elect of the Association of Teacher Educators, has been a professional educator for over 25 years. She has been a Head Start teacher, elementary teacher, mental health counselor for the Juvenile Courts, superintendent, professor, and university dean. Throughout her career, Dr. Duhon-Sells has actively worked to bring greater multicultural understanding to the educational community, including co-founding the National Association for Multicultural Education, and serving as National President of this organization in 1992. Dr. Duhon-Sells has written extensively on the topics of violence and multicultural education, including publications on family violence, higher education for minority students, and parenting skills for parents of color. She currently serves as the Dean of the College of Education at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

FOREWORD

From 1985 to 1991, the homicide rate for 15- to 19-year-old males rose 154%, according to the Centers for Disease Control. While alarming, the statistics do not begin to convey the spiritual, physical, and emotional fallout for teachers, parents, members of the community, and most of all, our children.

School violence is one of the most complex and important issues in education today. It is reported and discussed in every medium, from supermarket tabloids and television documentaries to scholarly journals.

While violence is as old as mankind, its current threat to civilization and its pervasive impact on American education are unprecedented. It is not unusual to read reports in which middle school students are found with guns, nor to view a news account in which an honors student is shot to death or has shot his or her teacher.

School violence is more likely to occur in schools located in high-crime neighborhoods. However, this devaluing of human life transcends class, self-esteem, race, and family disadvantages. It is a problem that we all must confront, because it is spreading. Unlike many other ills of society, school violence has the potential for paralyzing the advancement of civilization.

The mere prospect of violence can damage a school's effectiveness. Many good teachers leave violent school environments. Many others either choose not to enter teaching or abandon the teaching profession. The intimidating and threatening atmosphere created by the presence of deadly weapons can make teaching and learning impossible. If a radio or a CD player in a classroom is a distraction to learning, then a student carrying a gun represents the worst kind of distraction.

There is no one, simple solution to the problem. The war on school violence is a war on many sociological, psychological, and environmental fronts:

television, racial hatred, neighborhood patterns, self-worth, and the decay of families. Nevertheless, it is a war that we must win.

As the end of the twentieth century nears, it is tempting to examine the great accomplishments of mankind. But the ugly side of humanity has also left its mark on this century. The atrocities of the holocaust and the genocides in Rwanda, Somalia, and Bosnia are only a few examples of the growing disregard for human life. These horrors, along with the countless individual acts of violence in our streets and our schools, must darken our pride in the advancements of the twentieth century.

However, most of the twentieth century is history and, therefore, beyond our control. What is very much in our control is the form and direction the twenty-first century will take. Our schools will have a pivotal role in shaping the character of the twenty-first century. Although curriculum innovation, site-based management, and other facets of school reform are important, none will be of much value unless schools break free from the constant threat of violence. As we conclude this millennium, we have an obligation to provide that assurance.

This publication is a timely contribution to the growing volume of literature that addresses this problem. Violence has many forms including vandalism and bullying, as explained in Part I, "Understanding the Problem," which addresses many of the complexities of violence in clear, easy-to-understand terms. In Part II, "The Nation Responds," the authors provide a wealth of ideas and tips about preparing teachers and parents to prevent and intervene in potentially violent situations. Rather than focus on one approach, this section includes dozens of strategies and provides resource listings of several programs. Part III, "Techniques for Teachers," is an ideal primer for use in planning or providing preservice or staff development for teachers. It gives an introduction to several effective conflict resolution, and peer-mediation programs.

The authors are to be commended for their efforts of scholarship and thoughtful reflection. The views explored in these chapters provide practical solutions to some of the causes of violence and will serve as a resource for further inquiry.

—William E. Moore
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INTRODUCTION

What do you think of when you hear the phrase, "violence in the schools?" The image that usually comes to mind is of children committing some vicious, physical acts toward each other. Mental images may include weapons, shootings, fighting, and gangs. Newspaper or television headlines detailing the gory details sweep across our mental screens. These images are followed in rapid succession with laments to the effect, "What is wrong with these children?" and "Why are they so out of control?" Implicit in these laments are impulses to blame and punish the children who commit acts of violence. However human these impulses are, they will not help us identify, analyze, and solve the problems of violence in schools.

Barring the existence of some debilitating trauma, children are not inherently violent. Nor do they learn to be so by their own choice. The violence of today's youth is a response to and reflection of what is happening to them in a society that has raised violence to a level of admiration and celebration. In this society, children of violence are merely acting out their own victimization. In a real sense, they are doing no more or less than what they see adults do.

We often speak passionately about the impact that role models and significant others have on the attitudes and behaviors of children in learning situations. Not restricted to positive and constructive endeavors, this impact can be found across the board of human interactions. Unfortunately, today's youth have numerous, high-profile models of violence in society. And these images are not coming only from the "criminal" segments of society. We repeatedly hear of individuals in prestigious positions of power and influence committing unconscionable acts of immorality and lawlessness, yet receiving only minimal punishment for their criminal, immoral, and unethical acts. Rather than abhor these individuals, mass media becomes fixated on the perpetrators and makes instant folk heroes of them. The notoriety they achieve makes it appear as if they are

being rewarded for their crimes and acts of violence. Law-abiding citizens who commit acts of care and goodness toward each other do not receive similar kinds of media attention. Mass media is incredibly powerful at making and selling images. However sad and disturbing it may be, then, there is little wonder that youth turn so easily to violence in their interactions. They are emulating the models society places so graphically before them. Therefore, it is unfair to blame them for following the guidance adults provide. What else are children supposed to do? We cannot expect them to raise themselves!

Individuals are social and contextual beings. Who they are is shaped by the experiences they have and the individuals they encounter. These "significant others" have powerful influences on their psycho-emotional and physical well-being, as well as on their attitudes, values, ethics, and behavior toward self and others. There is convincing evidence that individuals who grow up in abusive and violent households have a high tendency to be abusive and violent as adults. This pattern can be extended to societies as well. People who live in violent societies are likely to be more violent than those who live in peaceful societies. Given the level of violence in the United States, we should not be surprised at the magnitude of youth violence. It takes a very mature and skillful person to insulate himself or herself from the influences of society, to create psycho-emotional barriers of protection, and to locate alternative sources to satisfy his or her human needs. Most children are not so gifted. They are left exposed to the influences of society during the most impressionable years of their lives—those which coincide with K-12 schooling. And because of this exposure, we see what we, as society, are doing to our children in the acts of violence they commit.

American society has virtually abandoned its children. Our children are too often left emotionally adrift, physically alone, and unattended by the adults who are responsible for caring about them. Contrary to the common myth, this abandonment is not restricted to children of poverty or to children whose parents do not love them. Some of the most neglected children are in middle- and upper-class households. While their physical needs are being met, and they may even be showered with a wealth of material things, many of them are emotionally starved. I believe the problems caused when parents and adults do not give children the emotional support they need are self-perpetuating. If children grow up not being cared about and feeling emotionally secure, they will not have the will, ethics, or skills to care about others.

Some parents are so caught up in making money, accumulating material goods, and developing their careers that they do not have time for their children.

During their child's critical formative years of development, children are taught values, ethics, and morality by the primary care-givers in their lives. But for many hours of the day, these are not their parents. Regardless of how competent these individuals are, they do not have the same emotional attachment to and vested interest in children that parents do. While necessary, skillful care is no substitute for love. This apparent absence of emotional anchoring during early childhood may haunt individuals for the rest of their lives.

As children of means grow older, the emotional separation between themselves and their parents does not necessarily lessen. While their children were young, many parents were busy establishing their careers; as their children become adolescents, other pressures can interfere with emotional bonding. Career demands may increase, and this is often a critical time in the marriage cycle. When a marriage ends, the children are left without the emotional anchors they need to help them develop into caring, secure human beings who respect the rights and dignity of others. To compensate for the lack of family stability, many parents try to buy absolution and forgiveness from their children. But the end result is the same—the children feel emotionally abandoned. They may continue to search for love and attention without appropriate guidelines. Some of them may even feel that all adults should be punished for what their parents failed to do.

Children of poor parents do not escape these dilemmas. Many of them are emotionally starved and attention-deprived because their parents are so busy working to make ends meet that they are rarely at home. When they are, they are too exhausted to give their children the time, care, and attention they need and deserve. These children, like their middle- and upper-class counterparts will search for other sources to satisfy their need for emotional attachment and feeling of significance. Often these sources are peers in similar situations. When there is no parental supervision to guide youth through the various social relationships and challenges they encounter, children embark on a blind search, which can drift into extremist behaviors. In their first attempts to solve problems, they use last-resort measures, and often violence results. Since they have not learned emotional control and respect for others at home among people who care about them, why should they care about strangers?

All children need to feel emotionally secure. If there is no emotional support in the home, children will turn to their friends for support. After all, family and friends are the primary sources of social grounding for individuals. Therefore, much of what we see as violence in children may be psychological

responses to emotional abandonment, ways of letting the world know about their emotional pain, and means of fighting back. It most certainly is a cry for help. To respond to this appeal with vindictive and punitive strategies is counterproductive. Rather than diminish violence, such a strategy may increase it instead.

Youth violence is also cultivated and demonstrated in schools. Most of the time we hear about the violence students commit against schools, but rarely do we think about the violence schools commit against students. Undoubtedly, the initial reaction of most people to this idea is to dismiss it as asinine. And, if we think of violence as only some blatant physical act, then I would, too. But violence comes in many forms. Within schools it can appear when one group's experiences in and contributions to American (and human!) history, life, and culture is consistently denied, ignored, and denigrated. For African-American, Latino, Native American, and poor students to have to learn in environments when they see no positive reflections of themselves in school curricula, instructional activities, and institutional symbols, ceremonies, and celebrations is a form of abuse. It is an attack on the intellect, ego, self-concept, and self-esteem, and the effects are as devastating as physical abuse. Young Pai (1990) observes that "the culture to which one belongs [is] . . . the root of the individual's identity, because culture gives us a sense of power and confidence by giving us a basis for achieving our goals . . . To reject or demean a person's cultural heritage is to do psychological and moral violence to the dignity and worth of that individual" (p. 24).

Not only does this kind of "instructional and psychological violence" brutalize students, it also can instigate retaliation from the victims. Individuals can be abused for only so long before they strike back in some form or another. Within classes that deny the worth and contributions of all ethnic, racial, and cultural groups to the "American story," students from those excluded groups may engage in resistance and retaliatory behaviors. Sometimes this is aimed at school authorities directly; other times it is indirect and symbolic. Some behavior may even be self-directed. Some of the incidents in which students physically attack teachers may be motivated by curricula that are culturally insensitive and insulting. The seeds of dissension underlying confrontations between racial and ethnic groups of students may be sown by racist curriculum content. Here the students may be scapegoats for institutional perpetrators (the curricula) that seem unreachable. Anger and frustration motivated by instructional programs that are irreverent to and exclude culturally and ethnically different students also

may cause them to strike back symbolically in the form of vandalism to the school property.

While I am not condoning youth violence, I am suggesting that how we understand the issue may be somewhat simplistic, misfocused, and misguided. If this is the case, we will be unable to design effective educational, social service, and other remediating interventions against violence among children.

The chapters in this book counteract some of the prevailing notions about violence in schools and extend and deepen the analysis of the problem significantly. Their powerful messages should become explicit guidelines for directing educational efforts to combat violence among and toward our children. With a magnitude and range that is revealing and instructive, they demonstrate that violence among children is a multifaceted, multidimensional, and complex phenomenon which defies simple explanations and quick-fix solutions. It requires, instead, thorough analysis and comprehensive and long-term remediation strategies. The fact that the authors consider the issue from multiple perspectives suggests that we need to get far behind and deep underneath the acts of violence to gain clearer insights into their causes.

Violence among children is a disease, and behaviors are merely symptoms—not the causes of—the diseases. The degree to which we locate the causes and treat them directly will determine how effective we will be in isolating and curing the disease. If youth violence in the school is symptomatic of larger and deeper causes, then focusing the treatment interventions on the children alone will not solve the problem. If the contentions I have made here are valid, then certain interventions to decrease youth violence in schools are imperative. The goals of these should be to reclaim our children from the emotional and moral wastelands in which we have placed them. Several steps toward reclamation are to

1. Stop indicting and blaming children for their own victimization;
2. Create school climates of emotional support and loving care to counteract these voids in many children's lives outside the classroom;
3. Use multicultural curricula which treats the cultures and contributions of all ethnic groups in the United States honor and dignity;
4. Teach ethical codes of conduct that respect the human dignity of everyone; and

5. Develop skills for intergroup relations, cross-cultural consciousness, cooperation, and camaraderie.

When children understand their connectedness to each other, feel emotionally secure, and know that they are valued, they will be less hostile and harmful toward each other. When they see adults treating them in respectful, supportive, caring, and dignified ways, they will have models by which to gauge their own behavior toward others. As their sense of self improves, their problem-solving skills expand, and they become more closely affiliated with each other, children will be less likely to resort to violence. However, these skills must be taught; they are not learned automatically. Just as we have "taught" our children to be violent, we must teach them how to be nonviolent. If we don't want a violent future, we must act now. Let the reform agenda begin with the **reclamation of our children**. For surely,

If children are loved, they will love and be lovable.

If children are encouraged, they will become confident.

If children are valued, they will learn to value.

If children are praised, they will become praiseworthy.

If children are respected, they will reciprocate.

If children are taught, they will learn.

If children are celebrated, they will rejuvenate.

If children are nurtured, they will blossom.

If children are healthy, the world will survive!

—Geneva Gay
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PART I: UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

How Educators, Students, Parents, and Law Enforcement Officials See School Violence

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The National School Safety Center reports that more than 28,000 students and 5,000 teachers are physically attacked in our elementary and secondary schools each month. In February 1993, the National Education Association estimated that every day 100,000 students carry a gun to class; another study reported that 13% of all incidents involving guns in schools occur in elementary schools and preschools. Every school day, 6,250 teachers are threatened with injury and 260 are assaulted. *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* was passed March 13, 1994, as Public Law 103-227 (HR 1804) in an effort to provide safe, drug-free, violence-free schools by the year 2000.

Violence in the schools no longer can be controlled by teachers or administrators.

School programs against violence must deal directly with attitudes and actions that endanger kids most, and not deal only with gun safety. However, changing a teenager's behavior can be difficult. Jacqueline Brown, a professor at Bowie State University and the director of a violence prevention project, says, "Many young people juggle three sometimes-conflicting cultures or codes of conduct: 'the culture of the home,' 'the culture of the streets,' and 'the culture of

the school.'" Surprisingly, children and teenagers blame adults for not dealing with the problem.

The problems of violence and crime in our schools are clear, but what to do about them is more difficult to determine. Educators, parents, students, police, and community leaders usually respond with different strategies and approaches. Unfortunately, there is no magic formula. Developing or creating a comprehensive and systemic response to school safety is a complex and difficult task and will take a united effort.

To design effective programs to prevent violence, we first must understand how different people view the problem. An inventory was administered to assess the perceptions of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and law enforcement officers about ways in which school violence may be indirectly promoted and methods that can be used to alleviate or limit the rapidly growing epidemic of school violence. The investigation included surveys, interviews, group discussions, and a review of current literature.

Physical safety and psychological security form the essential foundations for our children's health, education, and overall development. Educators, parents, social workers, police, psychologists, and businesspersons must work together to help today's young people achieve academic and social competence. Our children are our most precious resource. Given a chance, they will grow up to be great contributors to the American dream.

Students' Perceptions of Violence

A large number of America's children are growing up amid appalling disorder. The lack of self-awareness results in a feeling of powerlessness and may lead to the child seeing adults as threats, rather than as supporters and providers. A sense of personal power is essential for all people, and many children find that bringing weapons to school provides them with that sense of power. Associated with the need for power is the child's need to have a sense of control and routine in his or her life. Many children feel that they have no control or routine in their lives. When these needs are unmet, children may turn to violence to fulfill them.

The research for this study identified a common factor among students who had no record or bad experiences with school violence or law officials. All of these students were affiliated with some form of religious group. The tone of the discussions was different with these children than with other children. These

children were easier to convince that school violence is everybody's problem; the other students viewed this study as just another ploy of education.

Many secondary school students feel that a lack of parental supervision at home (36%), involvement with drugs or alcohol (23%), and overcrowding and lack of supervision in the classroom (20%) are major contributors to violence in their own schools. A significant proportion of secondary school students (34%) believes that gang or group membership or peer-group pressure is a major contributing factor to school violence.

Parents' Perceptions

Parents fear for the well-being of their children. However, parents often use discipline techniques that create or contribute to negative attitudes in their children; and these negative attitudes often result in violent behavior. In addition, parents often have problems that dominate their attention; thus, their children are left without guidance or limits to direct their behavior.

There are numerous problems that cause parents to feel helpless. There are increasing numbers of single parents; and in many other families, both parents must work. At least two million school-age children have no adult supervision after school. The average income for a family of five is $11,400. Approximately 40% of American children are handicapped, and even more children are identified as emotionally impaired; these statistics may be related to the fact that one-fourth of pregnant women receive no prenatal care of any sort during the crucial first trimester of pregnancy. The result of this sad situation is reflected in the growing epidemic of school violence.

Traditionally, parents learned parenting skills from their parents, and those skills had been transmitted through the generations. Today, unfortunately, children are having children. The grandparents are in their late 20s to early 30s. There is no one to continue the chain of knowledge related to effective parenting skills. Everyone is struggling to survive.

Educators and Law Enforcement Officials

Educators often blame parents and the home for the violence that students cause at school. However, the blame must be shared. The majority of teachers and law enforcement officials believe that major factors contributing to violence in public schools include lack of supervision at home, lack of family involvement in the schools, and exposure to violence in the mass media. This is consistent

among teachers in all grade levels and school locations (urban, suburban, and rural).

Teachers with high proportions of minority and low-income students and those who believe their schools provide a low-quality education feel that all factors related to violence are more acute. For example, 95% of teachers who think their school provides an only fair- or poor-quality education believe that a lack of parental supervision is a major factor contributing to violence in their school; only 76% of all teachers feel this way. Seventy-three percent of these teachers also feel that lack of family involvement in the schools is a major factor; 73% also believe that boredom and a lack of motivation to learn are major elements.

More than half (54%) of teachers with all or many minority students feel that gang or group membership is a major factor contributing to violence in their school; one in three teachers nationwide feel that way. The majority of law enforcement officials (59%), and a significant proportion of secondary school students (34%), also believe that gang or group membership or peer-group pressure is a major contributing factor.

The majority of administrators feel that school violence rates a "low" as a factor causing educators to quit the profession. However, anxiety about school violence is rated "moderate" by one-third of administrators in large districts, in schools with predominantly black student populations, and in schools that are equally divided by race. Yet, urban administrators do not indicate that school violence causes the higher levels of anxiety. Perhaps their faculties are receiving the necessary training and have the skills to handle the violent behavior effectively.

Conclusion

Schools need to be more involved with parents, and they must work with parents to help them learn how to assist both the school and their children. Giving parents a real voice in making important decisions about the discipline and educational experiences of their children will help create a stronger support system for all. The lines of communication between the home and school must always be open, and parents must be treated with dignity and respect.

Students need to learn skills in controlling their feelings of anger and rage. These emotions must be channeled in positive directions. Sponsoring training and placement programs would be significant steps in making a difference in teenage violence.

America's adults must focus on changing their perceptions about the future of our children. Everyone must think of strategies to help children recognize the negative impact of their violent behavior, and everyone must work together to achieve this goal. This nation must teach adults and students how to love, respect, and value each other.

Addressing School Violence through an Understanding of Gangs and Gang-Related Behaviors

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Gangs have existed in the United States since the 19th century, though gang activities then were somewhat limited. Today, gangs exist coast to coast. They are no longer just a big-city problem. Many communities and neighborhoods once untouched by organized crime and violence now find themselves threatened by gang activity (McWhirter et al., 1993). Today's gangs are better organized, much more mobile, remain active for longer periods, and have access to sophisticated weapons. They also are more like corporations, with franchises in various regions of the country and with their own specialists in money laundering, marketing, tax evasion, and strategic planning (Stephens, 1994).

Gang membership has also experienced some changes. In the past, gang membership was limited primarily to adolescents and young adults. Today, "mini-gangs" of grade-school children are not uncommon, particularly in large metropolitan areas (Boozer, 1989).

There have been many reasons given for the spread of youth gangs throughout our nation. Some of these reasons are single-parent families, two working parents, latch-key kids, growing poverty, overcrowding, racial conflict, and hopelessness in youth (Martinet, 1993; Stephens, 1994). However, the reasons that the youths themselves give for joining gangs can be surprising.

In a documentary on gangs, *Dreams Under Fire: The Gang Crisis*, youth from Asian, African-American, Hispanic, and Euro-American backgrounds disclosed that they joined gangs for a number of reasons. Among those identified

were a sense of belonging; wanting a family; following parents and older siblings into gang membership; wanting love, attention, and respect; wanting to be protected; and wanting money (Martinet, 1993). Many gang members come from intact nuclear families (Jankowski, 1991), but the gang serves as a surrogate extended family for youngsters who do not perceive their families as meeting their needs of nurturance, belonging, or acceptance (Huff, 1993).

Students Most Susceptible to Gangs

All students are susceptible to gang involvement. Although in the past the students most susceptible to gang involvement were generally ethnic minorities (Asians, African-Americans, Hispanics) from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, this is no longer the case. Students involved with gangs cross all ethnic, racial, cultural, geographic, and socioeconomic boundaries. Additionally, recent trends indicate that female gangs are experiencing rapid growth in a previously male-dominated enterprise.

Students with disabilities also appear to be at risk for gang involvement, especially those with emotional and behavioral disorders, learning disabilities, and mental impairments.

How Gangs Infiltrate the Schools

Gangs represent a serious community problem. The infiltration of gangs into the schools represents an even more serious problem. Although many gang-related incidents start in the community, they almost always spill over into the schools (Trump, 1993). Gangs can infiltrate schools in a variety of ways. The most obvious is clothing. Gang members wear certain clothes to communicate their membership (Burke, 1991). Although not every clothing fad signals gang membership, certain patterns and behaviors warrant a closer look. Tursman (1989) outlined six identifiable signs that serve as distinctive warning signals to signify the infiltration of gangs in schools:

- *Colors.* A particular color displayed prominently on jackets, hats, shoelaces, beads, pocket linings, gloves, or bandannas.
- *Styles.* A distinctively uniform appearance, such as baggy khakis, a bandanna hanging from a pocket or tied to a belt, a fur hat, a pattern shaved on the head, name-brand accessories with a double meaning, wearing a single glove or earring, tilting a hat a certain way, or lacing a shoe on only the left or the right.

- *Conspicuous consumption.* Anything expensive, including gold jewelry (even clip-on gold teeth), fur jackets, designer outfits, beepers (carried by drug dealers), luxury cars or special models of jeeps, or cash.
- *Graffiti.* Symbols such as stars, pitchforks, numbers, or initials spray-painted or penned on textbooks, desks, walls, overpasses, or bridges.
- *Swaggering.* References to weekend drug and booze parties, mimeographed sheets announcing such parties, or special handshakes in the halls.
- *New friends.* Young adult men from out of town or cars with out-of-state license plates (p. 13).

To assist schools and community officials in identifying the presence of gangs in the schools, Stephens (1994) developed the "Gang Assessment Tool." A questionnaire with 13 items, this tool can indicate if the school has significant gang problems, an emerging problem, an immediate need for a comprehensive intervention plan, or an acute gang problem requiring total gang prevention, intervention, and suppression programs.

Bridging the Gap between the School and the Community

It is not easy to bridge the gap between the school and the community to save our school from gangs. Although "drug-free" and "gun-free" school zones solicit the cooperative support of students, parents, school administrators, and law enforcement officials, more is needed to dispel the impact of drugs, gangs, and weapons in the schools.

It is unrealistic to believe that a single, national curriculum will solve the problem of youth violence. However, we can make po ive strides by developing a curriculum that "incorporates the school into the community and gets the community into the school" (Burke, 1991). A partnership with the community provides students with a sense of belonging to society. It also signifies that the community recognizes the importance of providing youngsters with guidance. Teachers can provide the most important link between the school and the community.

We must employ a systematic and comprehensive approach that incorporates prevention, intervention, and suppression activities. A gang prevention/intervention team can eradicate most, if not all, gang-related activities in our schools and communities. Key players in a gang prevention/intervention team include educators, law enforcement officers, students, parents, local

judges, prosecutors, social service personnel, parks and recreation employees, probation and correction officers, members of local churches and synagogues, business leaders, elected officials, child protective services personnel, emergency personnel, counselors, and local hospital representatives (Stephens, 1994).

Strategies for Dealing with Gangs and Gang-Related Behaviors

President Clinton, in an effort to halt the rise in crime and violence in our nation's schools, emphasized the need for "safe schools" legislation in his 1993 State of the Union Address. This legislation would authorize funding for (1) anti-crime and safety measures, (2) education and training programs, (3) counseling programs for victims of crime in schools, (4) crime prevention equipment, and (5) preventing youth involvement in gangs and organized crime (Cheek, 1994).

A number of school districts have implemented initiatives to combat the escalating violence among students. An article in the February 7, 1994, issue of *Nation's Cities Weekly* described the efforts of several schools to eliminate gangs and violence. For example, the Fresno Unified School District addresses immediate campus safety issues while providing programs to teach values, change attitudes, and help parents and children understand conflict resolution. The El Paso Independent School District established a Stop the Violence Coalition and adopted such programs as "Crime Stoppers," parent patrols, and at-risk coordinators at every elementary school.

The Cleveland City School District made violence prevention a priority through its health initiative programs, teacher training, and community involvement. Some of the district's activities are youth mediation and peer counseling programs for teachers and teams of students, a violence prevention curriculum in health education, and the STAR (Straight Talk About Risk) K–12 program.

The Pittsburgh Board of Education approved a comprehensive K–12 alternative education support system, which includes planning for a high school program for the most seriously disruptive students (*Nation's Cities Weekly*, p. 13).

Other school-based strategies that can be successful in reducing gang activities include gang-prevention curricula, a hot line to report gang crimes, a model dress code, a visitor screening policy, inservice training in gang awareness, community networks, parenting classes, attractive extracurricular programs, and community service programs (Stephens, 1994).

Many measures have been implemented by schools and communities to address gang problems. Unfortunately, many have failed; and some have inadvertently made matters worse (McEvoy, 1990). According to McEvoy, "get tough" law-enforcement measures do not seem to work. There is no evidence that heavy police presence on school grounds will reduce gang activity, and a strong school suspension policy seems to do little to deter gangs. McEvoy stated that the tactic with least probability of discouraging gang involvement is to tell students to "just say no" to gangs.

Summary

Schools and communities need a better understanding of the extent and nature of gangs, guns, and school violence. Schools and communities also must build networks and partnerships with students and parents to get them more involved in the process of making schools safe, disciplined, and drug-free.

Relying on such measures as metal detectors and security personnel is not enough. Cooperative relationships with all segments of the community are the key to reducing the influx of gangs, guns, and violence in the schools.

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CURBING VIOLENCE: A CHALLENGE FOR THE NATION'S SCHOOLS

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A major factor in the failure of the school in curbing violence has been the expanding "cultural-ideological conflict" between the school and children from violent, inner-city neighborhoods. Residential segregation forces children to live in an environment where poverty, joblessness, welfare dependency, and educational failure prevail. The most disturbing outcome of the social and economic isolation of inner-city children is their increasing opposition to traditional American values. These children do not consider it a stigma to be apprehended by the police, to fail in school, to be disrespectful of the property of others, or to use aggressive means to settle disputes. These students are members of an underclass, and the schools are failing to help them.

But the effects of residential segregation are not contained in inner-city neighborhoods. The adverse consequences of this condition extend beyond the boundaries of these neighborhoods.

The cost of violence to local communities and to the nation is mind-boggling. Kids are killed because they happen to be in the wrong place; lives are snuffed out for small change; children are beaten to death by gangs for trespassing in their neighborhoods.

This loss of lives robs society of potentially valuable human resources. But there are other costs, as documented by Pierre Thomas in the *Washington Post*. Violence increased the nation's costs for health care by $13.5 billion in 1992. Theft costs retailers about $36.9 billion each year. And each year the country is spending or losing in excess of $163 billion because of the consequences of crime (Thomas, 1994).

Unfortunately, the cost of crime and violence can be expected to soar. There are several reasons for this problem. First, most of the strategies used to control violence are reactive, thus focusing on the symptoms rather than on the causes. Second, community agencies tend to act independently. Currently, there seems to be very little collaboration among such organizations as criminal justice, religious organizations, social service agencies, health-care institutions, civic groups, and the schools. No one program or agency acting alone can curb violence. As U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley advised, "there are no simple solutions, and no one program or policy that, by itself, can work. Solutions are to take hard work and a concentrated, coordinated effort by the entire community" (Riley, 1994).

Violence and Teaching and Learning

Some people place the blame for violence on the behavior deficiencies of the students, saying that the children do not have the motivation, study habits, and family support needed to succeed in school. But there has been growing support for the view that the school has not been successful in teaching at-risk students because the underlying focus of the school has been on treating the symptoms, rather than the causes, of the problems the students are having in school. Addressing the symptoms rather than the causes is a useless effort.

Improving the performance of students in school has been the subject of national debate since the 1980s. Efforts to reform the schools were driven by the assumption "that mediocre student performance was caused by weak standards inherited from the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, inadequate instructional time in academic subjects, and poor instruction by teachers" (Cuban, 1992). Responses to the perceived inadequacies of the school have included revisions in the core curriculum, higher graduation requirements, statewide evaluation of teachers, testing to determine a student's eligibility for grade promotion, establishing a minimum grade point average for participation in extracurricular activities, increasing salaries for teachers and other school personnel, and stricter school attendance policies.

Despite these extensive efforts, the academic achievement of American students continues to be disappointing, especially the achievement of disadvantaged black students. Their performance still lags behind that of whites. Dropout rates of black high school students in the inner city reach as high as 50% in some school systems. Many of the inner-city students who managed to graduate from high school did so without acquiring the skills needed to perform in the mainstream economy. As Cuban (1992) noted, "reform policies of the 1980s worsened the schooling of the urban poor, further widening the gap between the educational haves and the have-nots."

More worrisome is the apparent decline of national interest in improving the school performance of inner-city students (Schorr & Schorr, 1988). Some critics have expressed the irrational view that spending more money on the education of these children is equivalent to "throwing money into a black hole" (Kozol, 1990). There are others who maintain that all programs planned especially for the disadvantaged and at-risk students end in failure.

The failure of the school to improve the school performance of disadvantaged or underclass children may be traceable to two interrelated forces. First, the academic performance of these students is affected by certain social and economic developments in both the larger society and the black community. Second, policies and practices in the school contribute to the unsatisfactory performance of disadvantaged children. As the William T. Grant Foundation Commission (1988) advises, "efforts to produce success in school . . . without complementary efforts in families and communities . . . are unlikely to make a substantial difference."

The interplay of forces external to the school and those within the school has given rise to a conflict in cultural values between the students and the school, thereby handicapping the learning of the students. One important factor in the emergence of this conflict of values is the environmental socialization of at-risk children. As noted earlier, the most significant aspect of this environmental socialization is the isolation of children from mainstream society. Concentrated in blighted inner-city neighborhoods, children tend to display characteristics that reflect the acceptance of crime as a respectable career, dependency on welfare, rejection of the dominant values of mainstream society, high rates of joblessness, and high rates of teenage pregnancy. These children lack ties with mainstream society and with individuals who value education and productive employment. As Auletta (1982) notes,

> *by the time slum children are age six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically reared to take advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunity which may occur in their lifetime.*

Inner-city and underclass youths relate principally to their environment, and much of their socialization is geared to surviving in their cultural context (Glasgow, 1980). These youths go to school with certain behavioral patterns and personality characteristics that cause them to be in conflict with the school. They have been socialized to seek instant gratification, to act on impulse, to reject the behavior codes of the school, and to resolve conflicts by resorting to violence. Further, they are deficient in motivation and in social, linguistic, and cognitive skills. These deficiencies put the students at risk of becoming school failures, early dropouts, or high school graduates who are functionally illiterate.

Schools have resorted to a variety of practices to respond to the unsatisfactory progress of a large proportion of disadvantaged students from violent neighborhoods. These practices include tracking and ability grouping, classifying students by their test scores, placing a large proportion of inner-city students in special education classes, and enforcing strict disciplinary codes. These efforts have benefited the haves, but not the have-nots or the underclass children. As Glasgow (1980) argues, "the inner-city school system has had a devastating impact on black youths; it has failed to educate, train, socialize, or in other ways to help them."

Reducing Violence in the Schools

Children living in neighborhoods where violence is prevalent are at-risk for violence (Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991). They live in fear of drive-by shootings, gang fights, and harassment by the police. Understandably, caring parents forbid their children from going to the parks, playing in the streets, or just sitting on the porch. The children are confined to their homes, where they're taught to hit the floor when they hear gunfire.

Many educators believe that curbing violence is the responsibility of the criminal justice system. However, despite the appointment of more judges, increases in the size of the police force, and construction of additional jail cells, violence continues to grow. As a 1981 FBI report explained, "criminal homicide is primarily a societal problem over which law enforcement has little or no control" (Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991).

However, curbing violence is not a hopeless cause. In recent years, educators, psychologists, and health-care specialists have become involved in efforts to develop effective programs for curbing violence in the school and in the larger community.

One approach focuses on teaching children how to resolve their differences without resorting to aggressive behavior. The students are taught by teachers, identified as "peacemakers," who are certified to participate in the program after having received special training in violence prevention (Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991). An important component of this violence prevention program is the use of "peer mediators." These are students who have been trained to assist teachers in controlling violence at the school.

Straight Talk About Risk (STAR) is another approach to helping students curb their aggressive behavior (Riley, 1994). The STAR program teaches children about the consequences and realities of the use of guns and knives and other forms of aggressive behavior in resolving disputes.

These approaches to curbing violence seem to be gaining in popularity. However, there are other conditions in the school that must be met to help control violent behavior.

First, it is crucial that the school provide a safe and supportive environment so that teachers feel free to teach and students feel free to learn. It is essential that educators enforce fair school regulations and policies regarding student behavior. More important, the environment must be free of guns, knives, and other weapons. The school will need the help of the larger community in maintaining a safe atmosphere, but security officers may be needed at first.

Second, it is crucial that faculty members are committed to the teaching and learning process. They must believe that at-risk students are capable of serious studying and learning, and they must be able to relate to the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students. Toward this end, it is recommended that the school system institute the following program for the reorientation of faculty and staff:

1. Provide opportunities for the faculty and staff to establish meaningful relations with at-risk children in their own cultural setting. Arrange for teachers and administrative staff to visit churches and recreational areas, to confer with parents in ghetto neighborhoods, and to tour various parts of the community, including shopping areas and workplaces.

2. Conduct a series of professional seminars for faculty and staff. These seminars should focus on some of the critical causes for the unsatisfactory performance of disadvantaged students. It is important that the seminars be based on relevant research and that they focus on the interrelationship of the school, the home, and the community, as well as the effects of this relationship on the performance of at-risk students.

3. Conduct workshops on conflict resolution. It is important for the faculty to know about strategies for teaching students how to settle disputes without resorting to aggressive behavior.

Third, encourage members of inner-city neighborhoods to participate more extensively in making decisions about school policies, practices, and programs. Unfortunately, parents of at-risk students usually have not been encouraged to participate in the activities of the school. As a consequence, the parents tend to have negative attitudes about the school. With some encouragement and support, these parents could make a valuable contribution to improving the effectiveness of the school in controlling violence and in improving the academic performance of the children.

Fourth, re-examine school policies and practices that may have exclusionary effects on at-risk students. Such practices as tracking students on the basis of their standardized test scores tend to exclude at-risk students from good teachers, from challenging programs of instruction, and from up-to-date facilities. As a consequence, a large proportion of these students are destined to become early dropouts and failures. Many others will be inclined to engage in violent behavior. Challenging instruction and the opportunity to experience success would encourage the students to develop self-esteem and more positive attitudes.

The Role of the Community

Teaching students who have been indoctrinated to be aggressive in resolving disputes is too complex a job for the school to do alone. As observed in *The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families*, what students experience "at home, at school, in the community and at work are interconnected, and our response to problems that arise from any of these domains must be equally well integrated" (William T. Grant Foundation Commission, 1988).

Addressing these needs requires a community-wide effort that involves the mobilization of white and black citizens, civic and governmental agencies, indus-

trial and business corporations, and social scientists. One primary concern of such an effort should be to encourage the disadvantaged to accept the work ethic rather than dependency on welfare. Job training programs conducted by the private sector are essential. Systematic efforts must be made to modify those social and welfare policies that discourage people from working. And it is important for disadvantaged students to have meaningful contacts with mainstream society outside of the school.

Numerous studies have revealed that students are more likely to do well in school when they come from a stable family that has a value system consonant with mainstream society and a neighborhood that is supportive of the school. Therefore, creative programs must be conducted to enrich the neighborhoods of the inner city. These should include effective police security, health care, training in family care, safe recreational programs for youth, and improvements in the physical appearance of the neighborhoods.

Such a program must be accepted as a social responsibility by the entire community. It would yield many positive benefits. It would help reduce violent behavior in the community, encourage more students to stay in school, and bridge the gap between the value system of the neighborhood and mainstream society.

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Family Violence and the Schools

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School violence often is rooted in domestic violence. Children begin to learn their social skills in the home environment, and children from homes where domestic violence occurs bring to the classroom the behaviors learned from their environment. The home presents for the child opportunities for modeling or imitation, a premise espoused by Social Learning Theorists, including Bandura (1986). Thus, the display of violence within the home, especially in the presence of offspring, may teach children that violence is a legitimate means of settling a family dispute or is an expected role of a father, mother, friend, or significant other.

Domestic violence is a serious problem in our society. The United States Surgeon General identified battering as the single largest cause of injury to women in the United States (MacManus & Van Hightower, 1989). Battering within a family also often extends to the children. One Colorado study reported that 53% of battering husbands also abused their children. Contrary to the common perception that the incidence of battering is highest among the poor, uneducated, and minority populations, research has shown the problem to exist among all age groups, races, ethnic and religious groups, educational levels, and socioeconomic groups (Walker, 1984).

Today's schools have become battlegrounds upon which family dysfunctions surface at an alarming rate. The increased incidence of teen suicide, gang initiation rites, shootings, and rapes have sent administrators and school boards struggling for solutions. Suppressed aggression from within the home often is released in the school, and students from violent homes may attack peers and teachers. Such students may also succumb to alcohol and substance abuse and may become suicidal.

School personnel often are ill-prepared to handle such problems. Students from violent families may become aggressive and have violent outbursts, or they

may show depression or withdrawal, which often is a cry for help or a symptom of the onset of suicidal behavior (Garrison et al., 1993). However, such behaviors may be mistaken by the teacher as conduct disorder, and the student may be referred for special education services or behavior clinics. These referrals may further damage the student's sense of self (Dreikurs in Charles, 1989).

Even though the school attempts to remediate the challenging behaviors of students, our traditional remediation methods may be coercive and may cause increased classroom disruption. Dodge (1983) suggests that

> *the mere fact of labeling a child or providing treatment for a child in a special school environment can result in abnormal conditions that may in turn lead to severe social problems for a child. . . . Such problems have been documented to result in seriously abnormal social development, with serious psychological and sociopathic problems becoming increasingly apparent in adolescence and adulthood.*

The critical role that police play in stopping domestic violence has been noted by a number of scholars and practitioners. Dutton (1979) sums up their role well: "Since the police come into contact with family violence more than any other government agency, they have the potential for making the greatest impact on detection and cessation of future violence" (McManus & Van Hightower, 1989).

However, advocates for battered women perceive the police to be a major impediment to implementation of domestic violence policies because they under-enforce laws against domestic violence (McManus & Van Hightower, 1989). Very often, police departments use the judicial system as a means of appeasing a woman or discouraging her from pursuing complaints against her husband. Prosecutors, like police officers, often view the problem of battery as primarily a civil and personal matter, requiring neither arrest nor judicial response. The court personnel and police maintain that a woman will not pursue a charge against her husband and testify in court. The indifference of the legal system may increase the isolation experienced by a woman and discourage her from seeking further help; eventually, she may stop calling the police. If the violence continues, she may become a murder victim (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

To change this perceived indifference, police departments across the country are implementing pro-arrest policies, which empower the police to make arrests if they have probable cause to believe a crime has been committed. The benefits of a pro-arrest policy and increased officer training go beyond just

reducing domestic violence incidents. The victim begins to regain her self-confidence and seek help because she has been believed. The assailant receives a message that his violent behavior is against the law and that he will be treated accordingly. The children from those violent homes also benefit from the pro-arrest approach because they learn acceptable nonviolent methods of communication.

Violence in the home and school are related, but we have a long way to go before we can solve this problem. The traditional school remediation attempts are insufficient, and they even may exacerbate the problem by harming the self-image of the children. New strategies are needed that involve the family, the teacher, and other professionals in the reduction of violence in both the home and the school. Our tasks as educators, researchers, and mental health professionals include recognition of the universality of violence and the development of an ecological approach to its solution.

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IDENTIFICATION OF VARIOUS LEVELS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

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About three million thefts and violent crimes occur in or near primary and secondary schools each year. This represents 16,000 violent and criminal acts per school day, or one violent incident every six seconds. Almost 50% of the violence involving children between the ages of 12 and 19 years happens within school buildings, and 12% of violent acts involve lethal weapons. Almost 37% of violent incidents involving guns, knives, and children occur within the communities neighboring the schools (Stephens, 1994).

School violence crosses racial, class, and geographic boundaries. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the rate of arrests for violent crimes rose twice as fast among young whites as among young blacks between 1982 and 1992. While both ethnic groups accounted for an equal number of violent crimes, black youths were arrested and detained for violent crimes at five times the rate of young whites. Research reveals that black students are significantly more likely than students from other groups to be suspended from school and subjected to various disciplinary measures because of behavior that is considered disruptive, inappropriate, or violent. Students belonging to the middle and upper socioeconomic classes are treated in a more positive manner than are those coming from disadvantaged or lower socioeconomic classes (Persell, 1993).

Many students experience a significant amount of frustration in school due to low academic achievement and related problems, and aggressive behavior often is the result of this frustration (Campbell-Whatley, 1993). Schools are failing to motivate and satisfy the needs and interests of underprivileged and minority students, such as Latinos, Native Americans, and African Americans. Because of this general dissatisfaction and frustration with the academic experience, these students are losing their interest in school and learning.

Consequently, academic failure, dropping out, and vandalism and other forms of violence among these groups are increasing (Frederick, 1988).

The term "violence" refers to a broad range of situations that are considered inappropriate and unacceptable. Although they are not synonymous, such terms as hostility, psychological and physical aggression, anger, and rage have been associated with the concept of violent behavior. For this discussion, violence is considered an overt, aggressive act that results in physical or psychological pain, injury, or death.

The causes of violent student behavior are complicated and involve social, moral, and economic changes in America. These changes make it difficult for parents to provide children with discipline, respect, and responsibility. Students who are troublemakers often are distressed and frustrated individuals whose problems may be caused by situations both inside and outside the school.

Because of the important role that the teacher plays in the child's intellectual and emotional well-being, it is important that teachers are sensitive to the changing moods and behavior of their students. Not all violent acts represent the same causes or necessitate the same responses. An awareness of different types of violence will provide opportunities for the teacher to interact effectively with the students when a potentially disruptive classroom situation occurs. In other words, there are different kinds and levels of classroom conflicts that require varied strategies for their resolution.

Levels of School Conflict*

A major problem in effective classroom management is the failure to recognize the different "levels of conflict" and to use strategies that prevent the escalation of conflict. Catching conflicts in the early stages of their development can be the best strategy for controlling and resolving them. Trowbridge and Bybee (1990) point out that

> *understanding different student behaviors that can lead to problematic situations can help prevent some conflicts, as well as provide direction and guidelines for the intervention and resolution of others. Such understanding clarifies how conflict escalates; that is, each party moves to a higher level, hoping the other party will back down.*

* This section is adapted from Trowbridge and Bybee (1990).

In some unfortunate cases, simple conflicts can escalate to violent and destructive episodes with the school.

Potentially violent behaviors are categorized at five levels of complexity and are classified as either active or passive.

Level A

Description

This level is characterized by student behavior and student-directed activities that are considered by the teacher as "unusual and rare for this particular student." The observed behavior often is tolerated and associated with the particular age group and level of cognitive development. The teacher often expresses surprise at the student's reaction to the particular situation.

Observed Student Behavior

The passive student is indifferent, aloof, unconcerned, detached, disinterested, inactive, lazy, or unmotivated.

The active student is mischievous, abusive, irritable, anxious, overzealous, or shows impatience or a lack of restraint in dealing with or reacting to stimuli.

Level B

Description

These are rare occasions involving the violation of established norms, but the student is not considered a problem child. There is no history of her or his consistently violating the school or classroom rules.

Observed Student Behavior

The passive student wastes time in idle lingering. This student spends more time than is necessary when doing a classroom assignment. The student occasionally daydreams and may attempt to achieve objectives that are regarded by the teacher and peers as impractical and fanciful. The student may begin to alienate himself or herself from peers and does not participate in classroom activities.

The active student displays inappropriate behavior that can involve other students, such as teasing or ridiculing another student publicly. This student occasionally clowns at a time when the focus should be on the assigned task. The

student may engage in idle remarks and comments, but the disruptive behavior also can involve physical maneuvers. The student seeks affirmation or approval through unconventional means and may be pushy in declaring that certain information is correct when the teacher and peers have unanimously agreed on a different answer.

Level C

Description

This level is characterized by student behavior that shows a consistent pattern of conflicts with minor school policies and classroom rules. Although the pattern of inappropriate behavior is recognizable, the rights of peers and teachers are seldom violated.

Observed Student Behavior

The passive student often avoids participating in cooperative or group instruction. This student becomes withdrawn, is socially detached and unresponsive, and is introverted and coldly impersonal.

The active student is habitually disobedient and unruly, violates or disregards rules, and abstains from various types of social contact. This student will act in opposition to others, will not participate and is uncooperative, is disagreeable, and will go to extremes to contradict the teacher. The active student will engage in negative behavior and attitudes marked by regular denial of or skepticism about nearly everything affirmed by peers and the teacher. He or she tends to refuse to do what is asked or does the opposite of what is asked.

Level D

Description

In this level of conflict, a persistent pattern of behavior violates major school or classroom rules and the rights of others. This pattern of behavior is recognizable and clear to teacher and peers.

Observed Student Behavior

The passive student is depressive. He or she appears to be sad and unmotivated. This student is self-destructive and shows a tendency for engaging in such activities as using dangerous drugs or alcohol.

The active student is aggressive. He or she has a hostile attitude and demonstrates it in culpable, unprovoked, overt, hostile attacks. This student fights, inflicts pain, and can engage in sexual attacks. The active student is destructive. He or she seems to possess an instinct to kill and tends to impair, damage, or wreck. This student expresses displeasure outwardly, becoming irate, indignant, and threatening.

Level E

Description

This level is considered the most extreme form of violent behavior and can lead to violence and injury to oneself and others, destruction of property, drug abuse, and other forms of destructive behavior.

Observed Student Behavior

The passive student can develop a dependency on alcohol or drugs that leads to depressive or aggressive behavior. This student can be suicidal.

The active student exhibits emotional or physical behavior that can cause injury or harm to self or others. This student may commit vandalism.

Trowbridge and Bybee (1990) caution that these levels should be considered as incomplete explanations of adolescent behavior. They are guidelines, not a model for understanding and managing classroom conflict and violence. They provide five basic questions that the teacher must answer in order to understand conduct that may lead to violence:

1. Does the student's behavior constitute a pattern?
2. Does the student act the same way in other classes?
3. Does the student behave continually in a way that is inappropriate or aggressive for his or her age?
4. Does the student's behavior consistently violate the rights of others, including the teacher?
5. May the student's conduct result in personal harm, either to self or others?

If the majority of the answers are in the affirmative, the principal, the school psychologist, and the parents should be informed and consulted (Trowbridge and Bybee, 1990).

There are measures that can serve to enhance a positive, productive, and harmonious teaching-learning environment. The levels and severity of school violence will diminish when efforts are made to:

1. Identify and work with students who are at risk of failure and dropping out.
2. Develop and implement curriculum reforms that are designed to motivate and effectively provide for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, sex, or ethnic group.
3. Recruit, train, and hire teachers who are members of the ethnic groups represented in the school. Children tend to respond positively to authority figures with whom they share common cultural and ethnic ties.

School violence is not limited to any particular ethnic group, geographic area, or socioeconomic class. Preventing the escalation of school violence will require combined school-community efforts and the commitment of all Americans to protect and educate all of our children in nonviolent school environments.

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VARIATIONS IN VIOLENCE

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To prevent violence in schools, one must first understand it. The patterns of violence are not the same in all schools or among all groups of children. This chapter addresses the kinds of violence that occur in both rural and urban schools. It also examines the causal factors that influence the violent behavior of students, sex differences in delinquency, criminal victimization in urban schools, violence perpetrated against teachers in rural schools, student perceptions of guns, and arson and vandalism.

Violence can be defined as a sudden and extremely forceful act that causes physical harm or suffering to persons and animals. Violence also can be perpetrated against property. However, a qualification needs to be made for property insofar as property owners can do whatever they wish with their property as long as it violates no law and no one is physically harmed in the act of destruction. Thus, violence in relation to property can be defined as a sudden, extremely forceful, and unauthorized act that causes harm or destruction to property (Rich, 1992).

There are many factors that affect delinquency and the tendency toward violent behavior in children. In 1984 Kaplan listed some of these factors as inadequate socialization, parental deprivation, alienation, and delinquent subcultures. Jenkins (1985) argues that "inadequate socialization in childhood may lead to a failure to develop empathy with others and the capacity for sharing and compassion. It is associated with parental deprivation, especially maternal, and the consequent development of hostile and fearful egocentrism manifesting distrust of others."

Kaplan argues that students may attack the values by which they were judged unworthy, thereby permitting them to withdraw from the conventional value systems and enabling them to substitute deviant standards that are more

readily achieved than conventional ones. Delinquent subcultures may develop that accept illicit activities, attack conventional values, and substitute the subcultural values as a measure of self-worth (Rich, 1992).

With the increase of one-parent families and families in which both parents work, the "latchkey kid" has become common. It has been estimated that more than two million youngsters are latchkey kids. Such youngsters, returning after school to an empty house, do not receive companionship or a sense of security from parents. These youngsters feel isolated and alone. The opportunity to interact positively with peers or adults is lessened. Their opportunities to become involved actively in their community's activities are restricted. As a result, such youngsters are likely to feel isolated and insecure. These insecure youngsters move unprepared into the transitional confusions of ego and social identifications associated with adolescence. This doubles or triples the tensions of their transitional adjustments. Thus, as Durkheim predicted, the lack of social solidarity in our contemporary American society is producing self-destructive adolescents.

Sex Differences in Delinquency

There appear to be sex differences in the delinquent behavior demonstrated by adolescents in our inner cities. Rhodes and Fischer (1993) found that boys are more likely to be referred for violations of the law, whereas girls are more likely to be referred for truancy, runaway behaviors, and social and personal problems. Their findings indicated that girls do not actually commit more status offenses than do boys. While boys and girls are equally likely to commit status offenses, girls are significantly more likely to be brought to court for those offenses. The researchers concluded that the statutes are applied in a discretionary fashion that allows parents and authorities to hold girls legally accountable for behaviors that they would not consider serious if committed by boys.

That study also found that males tend to engage in serious delinquent behaviors, while the behaviors of females tend to be more narrowly confined. For example, girls rarely engage in crimes that result in the acquisition of material goods. The only category for which girls and boys were arrested at an equivalent rate is assault and battery. In addition, the findings add to the growing body of evidence concerning the role of sexual abuse in the criminal behavior of young women.

Adolescent Perceptions of Guns

Violence in the schools is related both to students' perceptions of how safe their environments are and to their perceptions of the need to possess and use guns. Price, Desmond, and Smith (1991) studied adolescent perceptions of guns and found that the demand for guns might be reduced if confidence in collective security is enhanced, especially if crime is reduced and police protection is increased. The students in that study claimed that having a gun around the house made them feel safe and that it would protect them from criminals. They also said that if the police did a better job of protecting people, they would not need to have guns at home.

Furthermore, most students in that study, regardless of ethnicity, believed that guns are too easy to obtain and that more gun-control measures should be taken. Fifty-three percent of the African-American students and 40% of the white students in the study believed there should be metal detectors in every school doorway. Obviously, guns and gun violence are a concern among students. However, this fear of guns is likely to result in such defensive strategies among adolescents as carrying their own weapons or fleeing from the threatening environment.

Price, Desmond, and Smith also included recommendations for schools and health educators. First, increased public awareness is needed to help motivate the community to resolve this chronic public health problem. Second, schools need to become involved in teaching nonviolent problem-solving skills, such as conflict resolution techniques. Third, more health educators need to become involved in research on the topic of guns and violence. Clarification is needed on such issues as the roles of alcohol, drugs, racism, family violence, and the modeling of firearm use on the temptation to own and use guns (Price, Desmond, & Smith, 1991).

This study by Price, Desmond, and Smith focused on urban African-American youth. Urban African-American adolescents are over-represented among the poor and among the victims of fatal and nonfatal violence. Thus, health educators need to design violence-prevention programs for high-risk adolescents that interweave the issues of adolescent development with the issues of racism and poverty. Price, Desmond, and Smith argue that urban African-American adolescents are likely to encounter racism. Such contact with racism, combined with inadequate job opportunities, is likely to create a "free-floating anger" (Akbar, 1980). This unfocused anger is likely to lower the youth's thresh-

old for engaging in violent behaviors. Thus, violence prevention and education about guns must be based on establishing a healthy response to anger.

Arson

Another type of violence perpetrated in the schools is arson. Acts of arson are committed in all school districts, from the inner city to rural areas. According to government statistics, arson is the most expensive crime inflicted on our public school systems. A recent Senate report estimated that public schools in the United States lose close to $600 million a year to vandalism, and 40% of it is by arson (Wooden & Berkey, 1979).

The motivation for most school fires is revenge, spite, or disruption. Most often, the fires are set after a punishment by a teacher or other school authority. According to Aetna insurance investigators, school fires set by girls are less aggressive than those set by boys and generally are set to gain attention or to prevent a test from being administered. The girls often are the first to offer to clean up the mess from the fire and to give sympathy to the teacher (Wooden & Berkey, 1979).

The "delinquent" arsonists are strongly influenced by their peers and share such behavioral characteristics as a disruptive home environment, emotional disturbances, sexual immaturity, aggressive or destructive behavior, and poor academic achievement. They use fire as a means to cause malicious mischief, strike out at authority, and cover up other crimes, such as breaking and entering. Schools often are "fair game" to these juveniles (Wooden & Berkey, 1979).

Vandalism

Vandalism occurs in all types of communities. The National School Resource Network estimated that school vandalism in 1979 cost between $200 million and $500 million (Francis, 1982). A more recent survey by *U.S. News and World Report* placed the figure at $600 million. Most school officials agree that the figure is increasing each year. Millions of dollars that otherwise could be used for educating students are being spent on repairs, security measures, and insurance premiums. Some schools report that they spend as much on vandalism as they spend on textbooks. In addition to the waste of taxpayer dollars, there is an untold loss in terms of student morale, mistrust, and security.

Criminal Victimization in Urban Schools

In 1979, the Criminal Justice Research Center conducted a survey on criminal victimization in urban schools in 26 cities. The cities in the survey reported about 270,000 personal victimizations in schools, including rapes, robberies, assaults, and larcenies. Four out of five of the crimes inside the schools were larcenies without contact between the victim and the offender. Assault—either simple or aggravated—was the next most common type of crime reported (McDermott, 1979).

The report indicated that in-school victimizations have a higher proportion of young victims than do victimizations that occur in any other location. A majority of victims of in-school crime were under 16 years old. About two-fifths of the rape victims; one-half of the victims of aggravated assault, simple assault, larceny with contact, and larceny without contact; and two-thirds of the victims of robbery were between the ages of 12 and 15. More than three-quarters of the in-school victimizations were reported by students; the remaining victimizations were reported by teachers and others (McDermott, 1979).

Although weapons were used in many of the robberies and virtually all the aggravated assaults, they were used in only a small minority of the total in-school victimizations. When weapons were used, they were most often knives or objects used as weapons, such as clubs or bottles. Guns were rarely used. Generally, the injuries sustained by in-school victims were minor, such as cuts and bruises. Therefore, many injured victims did not require any medical attention and very few required hospital treatment. Even in the violent crimes—rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault—most victims reported that they were not injured to the extent that medical attention was necessary. The majority of the in-school aggravated assaults were classified as "aggravated" because of the presence of a weapon, not because of serious bodily injury to the victim (McDermott, 1979).

Although a great deal of theft took place inside the urban schools, it was primarily petty theft. The majority of offenders were perceived by their victims to be young, male, and black or of another minority. The reports of students, teachers, and other victims indicated that a considerable amount of crime that occurred in school was committed by pairs or groups of offenders. Robbery and assault involved multiple offenders and multiple victims more than any other type of crime in school (McDermott, 1979).

Most victims of in-school crime did not inform the police. Teachers and other victims informed the police more often than students did. Victims who failed to report the incident to the police said either that they reported it to someone else (probably to teachers or school administrators) or that they did not consider the incident important enough to report or that nothing could be done. Victims of rape, robbery, and aggravated assault were much more likely to mention fear of reprisal as a reason for not reporting the incident to the police than were victims of less serious crimes (McDermott, 1979).

Violence Perpetrated against Teachers in Rural Schools

Teachers also are affected significantly by school violence. Reported assaults on school personnel increased during the 1980s, and reports of antisocial behavior by students continue. In some localities, the problem has reached such a magnitude that the normal operation of school is curtailed. The National Association of School Security Directors estimates that violent acts in schools cost the American taxpayer nearly a billion dollars annually (Peach, Reddick, & Williams, 1991).

A study was conducted in 1991 to determine certain incidences of violent acts and other types of malicious conduct by students against teachers in selected rural schools in Tennessee. There were some 229 violent acts committed by students toward teachers in the 27 high schools responding to the questionnaires. These incidents included one murder, two armed robberies, one reported rape, 129 acts of vandalism, 86 threats against teachers, one case of arson, and nine acts of physical violence. Most students involved in disruptive acts were from single-parent or otherwise "broken" home situations. The students involved in this study also had been guilty of other delinquent acts (Peach, Reddick, and Williams, 1991). This study supports the argument that parenting and home environment can negatively affect students and increase the likelihood that they will commit an act of violence.

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PART II: THE NATION RESPONDS

Governmental Initiatives to Reduce Violence in the Schools

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Introduction

School violence has become too prevalent throughout the United States. Shootings and stabbings, muggings and molestations are perpetrated on children, teachers, and administrators. Despite the attention this problem has received, school violence may still be underreported. In a *USA Today Magazine* article entitled "America's Schools Confront Violence," Bill Hardy of the American Federation of Teachers states that principals are not reporting the full extent of violence in their schools (Boothe et al., 1994).

The United States Department of Justice reports that students bring more than 100,000 guns to school each day. These weapon are easily accessible, whether obtained from home, purchased on the streets, or stolen (Boothe et al., 1994). The National Centers for Disease Control state the presence of handguns on school campuses increases the possibility of violent altercations (Stephens, 1994).

According to the 1991 National Crime Survey, "half of all violent crimes against youths 12-19 occur in school buildings, on school property, or on adjacent streets" (Stephens 1994). At least 12% of violent crimes in school buildings involve a weapon. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that nearly 20% of the respondents had carried weapons to school; and the 1991 National Crime Victimization Survey Report found that 15% of students report gangs at their schools and, of these, 35% fear attack at school and 24% fear gang attacks as they travel to and from school. These data and statistics point to a growing atmosphere of intimidation and violence in the nation's schools.

Not every schoolhouse in America is besieged by violence. Nor is every student, teacher, and administrator entrapped in a labyrinth of threats and violence. However, the problem seems to be getting worse. According to Fox and Pierce (1994), murder among children is not about to stop. Even worse, they report, both the murderers and their victims are getting younger. According to a recent report by the Associated Press (Loh, 1994), juveniles are "the most common victims of violent crime" and are five times more likely to be the victims of rape, robbery, and assault than are adults over 35 years of age. Assaults constituted over 83% of violent crimes against youths.

At all levels, the government is trying to reduce this epidemic of school violence. Local school systems are trying to identify the best means to eliminate violent behavior by youths but are unable to resolve the many issues associated with school violence. Principals, teachers, and counselors did not create this nightmare of violence; but they are expected to solve this problem, often without the necessary resources to do so.

National Initiatives

Violence in the streets must be eliminated before we can eliminate violence in the schools. The violence in American communities has overtaxed the ability of local law enforcement authorities to resolve it. A shot fired in Topeka can now be heard in the halls of Congress and at the White House. Public outcry over school and street violence has reached its highest level in years.

The federal government has tried to respond with legislation and executive actions. President Clinton proposed tough legislation on crime and gun control. Congress proposed measures of its own. And several Cabinet members also proposed bold initiatives. All of these actions are intended to address crime throughout the United States, and especially violence in the schools.

President Clinton proposed a crime control plan that called for spending $3.4 billion to battle crime. The House of Representatives raised the authorization for that bill (HR 3355) to $3.5 billion, and the Senate increased the amount to $30 billion to pay for 100,000 police officers, to build new state and local prisons, to improve federal law enforcement, and to create prevention programs and drug courts. The crime package also includes $100 million in grants to schools to develop anti-crime programs.

United States Attorney General Janet Reno (1994) advocates intervening in the cycle of violence and offers several suggestions for attacking some of the causes of violence. For example, she has argued that the public should tell advertisers who sponsor television shows that "we are not going to buy their products if they continue to advertise on shows that are violent." She also suggests that production companies should design "innovative and creative programs that will persuade children to get guns out of the streets and out of the schools." Reno further suggests that we involve the nation's youth by asking them to help design such programs. She argues that extending this opportunity for involvement to youth shows that the country respects its children.

Secretary of Education Richard Riley also addressed the problems of violence among youths. In an article in *USA Today Magazine*, Riley (1994) points out that violence in schools occurs in urban, suburban, and rural areas, adding that "there are no single solutions, and no one program or policy that, by itself, can work." If the violence is to be eliminated, Riley argues, the entire community, from law enforcement to community organizations, will need to take responsibility in the effort: "federal, state, and local governments should view school safety as a priority and provide resources to combat the problems." He also urges people to reach out in personal ways to troubled youths in order to help them overcome the tendency toward violence.

In 1994 Deputy Secretary of Education Madeline Kunin chaired a public hearing by a committee of the National School Boards Association to examine anti-violence programs the federal government could sponsor. Among the suggestions were changing dress codes to eliminate gang clothing, training custodians to act as security guards, instituting family intervention programs, creating "teen juries," and installing metal detectors and surveillance cameras (Loh, 1994).

The Safe Schools Act of 1994, passed as part of the Goals 2000 program, is intended to help local schools deal with violence. The act authorizes $50 million

in grants to local school systems with the worst crime problems. These grants can be used to plan long-term strategies, to conduct community education programs, and to coordinate school-based activities to promote safety and develop violence prevention programs (Riley, 1994). According to Riley, schools and communities need to understand the relationship between school crime and its effects on learning.

The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act is intended to facilitate the sharing of information on the incidence of violence and drug use and to help schools develop effective policies that reflect the reality of what is happening in the schools and communities. Parents and students are to participate actively in forming these policies. Secretary Riley also believes that cooperative relationships between and among all segments of the community are important and essential.

State and Local Initiatives

State governments also are responding to the challenge of eliminating violence in the schools by passing legislation. Most of this state legislation is based on the concept of "drug-free zones" and prohibits the possession of drugs and guns in and around school campuses.

A number of other efforts are being made by state and local authorities to improve the atmosphere on school campuses. In an update on actions relating to school crime and violence, Veronica O. White (1994), of the National Conference of State Legislatures, reports a variety of actions by state legislatures, including the following:

Arizona: The School Safety Program trains school resource officers in violence prevention strategies.

Arkansas: A minor who has committed a criminal offense has his or her driver's license suspended. The state also passed the Arkansas Safe School Act to identify conditions of terrorism, specify drug-free zones, and prohibit handguns on school property.

California: State law requires prospective teachers to complete training in principles of school safety. The state also places a surcharge on parking tickets to fund programs to fight violence.

Colorado: State law prescribes the suspension or expulsion of a student for behavior detrimental to the safety of others on school property.

Idaho: The Youth Rehabilitation Act allows information regarding juvenile offenders to be attached to their school records.

Massachusetts: State law permits local administrators to suspend or expel students for violent acts that do not occur on school campuses. The state also has established regional schools to handle disruptive students.

North Carolina: State law allows parents to be charged if their children have guns in school.

Texas: State law requires the exchange of information between law enforcement and school officials on student criminal activity. The state also requires the State Board of Education to develop and distribute a model safe school checklist.

A common response of state legislatures has been to create "drug-free zones" around schools. For example, in 1989 the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 171, which established drug-free zones and mandated a comprehensive program of substance abuse prevention and education. Penalties for violating this law include a fine of not more than $1,000, a jail sentence of not more than six months, or both. The law establishes these zones around both public and private schools, including colleges and universities. In 1990 the legislature extended the drug-free zones to "any building or area used by the state or by a political subdivision; and used or operated as a playground or recreational facility, and all parks" operated by the state (Act 293 of the 1990 Louisiana Legislature).

In a similar effort, many states have established "gun-free zones" around schools. The first law establishing these zones–the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990–was passed by the U.S. Congress, but it was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which governs parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas (Johnson, 1994). Most state legislation establishing gun-free zones around schools was inspired by the federal legislation.

Enactment of these laws by state legislatures across the United States will enable local law enforcement authorities to provide assistance to local school systems that otherwise lack the capacity and legal authority to respond to these problems.

Nongovernmental Initiatives

Violence in schools is not separate from violence in the streets. A large number of private organizations are suggesting ways to deal with violence wher-

ever it occurs. For example, Dr. Carl Bell, president of the Community Mental Health Council of Chicago, favors an "interpersonal approach" to prevent violence, rather than using the criminal justice system to deal with violence after it has occurred (Moore, 1994a). He also believes that health-care professionals should have a role in "intervening in family violence" before it results in death. Finally, Dr. Bell insists that "people need to be taught nonviolent conflict resolution in schools and churches."

In 1994 the Reverend Jesse Jackson and the National Rainbow Coalition held a New Year's Leadership Forum on violence in the nation's capital. The forum attracted a long list of notables and more than 5,000 delegates concerned with the growing problem of crime and violence in American life. Jackson pointed out that "violence has been glorified, romanticized, glamorized and actualized into an American way of life–a lifestyle" (Moore, 1994b). The forum proposed a 10-point plan that includes, among other things, creating a national urban policy that involves jobs and justice, holding anti-violence conferences across the United States, challenging churches to mentor troubled youth, challenging students and parents to sign a pledge to end violence, and challenging schools and jails to start mentoring programs.

Summary

The most important challenge facing communities, schools, and citizens is how best to contribute in imaginative and creative ways of addressing the problems of violence. It is everyone's responsibility. As Georg Schwarzenberger (1954) so ably put it a half-century ago, "society is a means to an end, while the community is an end in itself." Thus, the people of the community must be united.

We simply must command the will to accomplish a task of restoring and uplifting our society, our communities, our schools, and our children. After all, the children are our future and the future of the nation. To bring peace to the world, we must achieve peace at home. There are numerous proposals for curbing violence in the schools. However, while the choice of a specific response may not be very clear, the need to respond is very clear.

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School Violence: Preparing Preservice Teachers

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Administrators realize that their faculty and staff are not prepared for the current crisis of school violence. School violence has increased more than 50% in the past 10 years. School-age children, regardless of socioeconomic level or ethnic identity, have become the initiators and victims of violent activities in both their schools and their communities (Felgar, 1992; Nordland, 1992; Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991; Seigal & Senna, 1991). Educators and others are overwhelmed by the rise in violence in such a short period of time.

This crisis has caused administrators to design staff development programs to help teachers develop an appropriate attitude toward and a repertoire of strategies for handling school violence. Because these skills are an integral com-

ponent of what teachers must know, they must become an integral component of teacher preparation programs as well. Teacher education institutions have a responsibility to provide preservice educators with a knowledge base about school violence. They must require courses on dealing with school violence for their students. Meeting such a need is no longer a choice; it is a necessity.

Types of School Violence

In the past, school violence could be placed in one of two categories: fights or bad behavior (i.e., stealing, talking back to teachers, truancy, etc.). Today those categories have been increased to reflect more serious misbehavior. Recent incidents of school violence now can be classified as verbal abuse, threats and physical abuse, and weapons and gangs.

Verbal Abuse. An overwhelming number of students, and at increasingly younger ages, have an extensive vocabulary of profanity and abusive words that they use in school and in their conversations. For example, one teacher has noted that preschool children have developed the skill of using profanity in the right context. Although profanity may not be used in the home, children learn this language from radio, television, movies, and other adults or children.

In addition, derogatory words that demean and devalue a person are viewed positively by children. Not all of these words are easily identified by adults. Students often attach a negative, abusive connotation to common words. For example, Baaith (1992), founder of Over the Hill, Inc., produced a list of words as a guide for parents. One of these words is "strawberries." Strawberries are girls aged 12 and under who are used to sell dope and as prostitutes. Educators should be aware that these "street" words often change. According to Baaith (1992), the terms change about every six months.

Verbal abuse can have more serious consequences. Often, it will trigger violence in schools. Students are protective of their self-image, and abusive words often lead to serious fights. Sadly, many students believe that using abusive speech is one of the requirements for acceptance by their peers.

Threats and Physical Abuse. Threats are verbal and written accusations that are intended to do harm. Threats against students and teachers have increased within the past several years. The fear produced by threats can cause students to surrender money and valuables and can keep them from reporting incidents to the authorities.

Teachers are not immune to threats and attacks by students. One study found that about 125,000 teachers are threatened by students each month, and at least 1,000 are assaulted by students so badly that they require medical attention (Johansen, Collins, & Johnson, 1990). Students have slashed tires, painted graffiti on cars and in classrooms, and robbed teachers. Often, students use threats to intimidate teachers and control their behavior. In many instances, threatening a teacher gives students status among peers.

Teachers need to know how to resist threats from students. One study found that teachers who display certain characteristics usually are not threatened by students (Boothe et al., 1993). These teachers stand firm against threats, continue to demonstrate care for their students, and combine high academic demands on students with a means for students to reach these expectations.

Weapons and Gangs. Weapons include more than just guns. Most school codes include as a weapon any instrument or device that is used for attacking or defending; that includes handguns, rifles, knives and sharp objects, and such other objects as bats or fists. However, guns are the most serious weapons in schools; and they are the leading cause of death for adolescent males. Students have easy access to guns, and everything from Saturday night specials to machine guns have been found in schools. (For more information on the impact of guns in schools, see Stephens, 1994, and Prothrow-Stith and Weissman, 1991.)

Gangs promote violence. They have moved beyond metropolitan areas to smaller cities and towns. Recruitment for gang membership, once restricted to high schools, now reaches into the upper elementary and middle schools. They are highly organized and now are very similar to corporations, though their economic base is mostly trafficking in drugs. Students who have been identified as loners and unsuccessful in school are easy candidates for gang membership.

Strategies for Responding to Violence

Teacher education institutions must prepare their students adequately for the classroom; thus, they must recognize and address the issue of violence in the schools. At one time, such training might have been considered only for those who intended to teach in an inner-city school. Now all teachers need such preparation, including those who will teach in suburban, small town, and rural schools.

Preservice teachers must be trained in proactive strategies that can be used to prevent violence before it takes hold in a school. Prevention is easier, cheaper,

and more effective than curing the ills of violence once it has become established (Rich, 1992).

There are a number of preventive approaches that have proven worthwhile. Preservice teachers should be familiar with and ready to use a variety of these measures before they enter the classroom as full-time teachers. Some of the strategies that have proven effective in preventing violence are listed below:

1. *Understand and improve the school climate.* Participate in steps to increase student interest in school while reducing the level of frustration (Rich, 1992). Interest sometimes can be enhanced by simply adding afterschool clubs or sports teams. One means of reducing frustration is to require uniforms or adopt a dress code. This not only eliminates gang-related attire; it also can eliminate the competition over fashion.

2. *Teach skills for resolving conflict nonviolently* (Deutsch, 1992; Gaustad, 1991). Teachers must master the skills for resolving conflict peaceably before they can teach them to someone else (Scherer, 1992). Preservice teachers should understand that conflict cannot be avoided, but it can be managed in socially acceptable ways and can even be used constructively. For example, it is important to know how to identify and respond to anger, how to control anger, and how to express it constructively (Black, 1994).

3. *Learn how to combat the factors that breed violent behavior.* Racism, poverty, social isolation, and inadequate educational opportunities can lead to violent behavior. Preservice teachers must learn some of the methods for overcoming those influences before they enter the classroom (Beland, 1990; Curio & First, 1993; Feshbach, 1984; Quarles, 1989; Rich, 1992).

4. *Develop ways to promote empathy in students.* Empathy is the ability to recognize, experience, and respect the feelings of others. When students have empathy for others, they are less likely to engage in violent behavior (Feshbach, 1984).

5. *Teach impulse control.* Violence often is characterized by impulsive behavior, which can be diminished through training. If students' tendencies to rush into things without thought can be reduced, violence often can be avoided (Camp, 1985; Beland, 1990).

6. *Give students many opportunities to practice solving problems.* Students must learn to make appropriate and wise decisions, and they must practice doing

so on a regular basis if they are going use those skills. Problem solving is an essential skill for dealing with peer pressure.

7. *Communicate with the parents or guardians of your students.* Parental support is an important element in building positive behavior in children.

8. *Learn the teaching methods that help reduce violence.* There are a variety of teaching methods that teachers can use to prevent violent incidents in their classrooms. For example, a nongraded discussion session can help students express their feelings and frustrations in constructive ways (Hampton et al., 1993). Individualized instruction also can prevent violence, because students who are successfully engaged in their work are rarely troublesome (Huml, 1994).

9. *Know how to build students' self-esteem.* A high percentage of students who participate in violence and gang activity suffer from poor self-esteem (West & Ostos, 1982). Preservice teachers should learn how to consistently offer praise and encouragement to students. They also should learn to avoid labeling students, because labeling can be a self-fulfilling prophecy (Klein, 1980).

10. *Learn how to use local resources.* For example, local community agencies can help students and families with special needs. A mentoring program can give students the positive role models they need. And cross-age tutoring programs not only help younger students who need academic assistance but also provide older students with an opportunity to perform positive activities (Huml, 1994).

Interventions

It is important for preservice teachers to know and understand the early intervention strategies that are being employed by educators across the nation. Preservice teachers will be exposed to some of these interventions when they student teach; and when they begin their professional careers, they will be expected to support and develop new interventions to deal with the violence. Some of the intervention programs that new teachers can expect to find in their school include the following:

1. Strict enforcement of safety and discipline policies. In some cases, assistant principals or "safety officers" have been hired to enforce discipline as their sole responsibility.

2. Violence prevention programs. Some schools have mandatory conflict-management training for all students and, in some cases, all teachers. Such programs as multicultural education, peer mediation, self-esteem building, and interpersonal skills training are becoming common interventions in public schools.

3. A uniformed police officer who has been trained as a school and human resource expert. This intervention is gaining wide acceptance even in elementary school settings.

4. A "closed campus."

5. Latchkey programs before and after school. These often include sports practice, tutoring, social clubs, and recreational time.

6. Metal detectors. Metal detectors usually play only a small part in the total school safety plan (Kongshem, 1992).

7. Video surveillance cameras. These are used especially in areas that have had a history of violent outbreaks.

8. Preschool and parent-training programs. These have been successful in reducing violence and supporting academic achievement.

9. Intruder drills and other crisis-management drills to ensure that students and other school employees are prepared for emergencies.

10. Community volunteers who serve as tutors, self-esteem builders, and mentors for students.

11. A school safety task force comprised of students, parents, educators, law-enforcement personnel, and community leaders.

Teacher education institutions should begin immediately to train their teachers in these and other strategies to prevent violence. These strategies no longer are needed only by teachers who will work in urban areas. They now must become part of the training for all teachers.

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Disarming Our Children: What Every Parent Can and Should Do

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Our children and our schools are under siege. An alarming number of stabbings, shootings, and other attacks are happening to our children and in our schools.

Parents who can afford it take their children out of public schools and place them in private schools or teach them at home. Others move to rural areas where they believe crime is less prevalent. Unfortunately, these parents do not know the reality of violent crime; it is everywhere, even in small rural communities, and even in private schools. According to a recent study conducted by Xavier University and the National School Boards Association, violence is occurring in schools all across the country, from the largest cities to the smallest towns, from the poorest districts to the most affluent suburbs (Boothe et al., 1994). You cannot run away from it.

Parents often are blamed both for the actions of their own children and for not doing their part to help make our schools safer. Most people seem to accept the popular notion that parents do not care, that they are too busy with other things. While in some cases this may be true, the majority of parents do care about the safety of our schools. Unfortunately, they often are kept unaware of

how bad the problem is and are not given specific instructions on what they can do to help.

According to Bill Hardy of the American Federation of Teachers, "principals do not report the full extent of school violence because they fear the negative image it might reflect on their own performance" (Boothe et al., 1994). School officials do not want their schools to get a bad reputation. They also do not want parents to panic and pull their children from high-crime schools. Although school officials often blame the parents for the violence in schools, they choose to keep parents in the dark. The only time most parents ever learn of the problem is when tragedy strikes close to home.

Perhaps if school personnel would stop expending so much effort on suppressing information about the number of guns, knives, and other weapons that are confiscated each day, parents would understand the gravity of the situation and be able to take steps before a child or teacher is injured or killed. The schools could include parents in planning for safety and enlist parent volunteers to do specific tasks. When parents are allowed to be a real part of the decision-making process about their children's schools and education, they become much more involved (Boothe et al., 1994). And real parental involvement makes a significant, positive difference in the level of school violence.

In 1994 one of the most violent high schools in my school district instituted a "Dads Patrol." Several fathers, the majority from minority, low-income families, bought matching T-shirts and appeared at the school every day, all day. They did not have to negotiate many volatile situations; just their presence was enough to keep the kids in line. The sad thing is, it took the death of a 16-year-old student to make parents aware of the problem. How much better it would have been if the administration had come to these same parents months before this tragedy and asked for their help.

We cannot place all of the blame for parental ignorance on our school administrators. Parents must accept some of the responsibility for informing themselves. Parents must attend school board meetings and ask for an accurate account of violence and of the weapons confiscated from students. Parents must ask about policies for reducing violence in our schools. We need to know what happens to children who bring weapons to school and to those who fight. We must not only demand that action be taken to stop the violence in our schools, we must do our part in helping to stop it. We must take responsibility not just

for our children, but for all children while they are at bus stops, on the school grounds, and at afterschool functions.

While most parents have to work, every parent can allocate time to help at school or at afterschool functions and sports events. Parents may not be able to do it every day; but one day each month, or even a half-day, will make a difference. Most employers will understand and support these actions. If we will not help, we have no one to blame for the situation but ourselves.

There is no question that it is difficult to be a parent, especially in this age of violence and drugs. As divorce rates and the cost of living soar, it becomes increasingly difficult to find the time to do a good job raising a child. Parents do not have unions or organizations to educate us in ways of dealing with growing youth violence. Parents cannot do it alone.

Good children left to their own devices get into trouble. Experience teaches us that the most dangerous ages are from 12 to 18. Yet this is the age at which young people are most likely to be left on their own. Because they have to work and cannot afford day care, parents are leaving their children alone at home at earlier ages. Even if the parents can afford day care, most children are left on their own when they reach 12 years of age. Just when children reach the age when they need the most supervision, there is no supervision to be found. For most, the only afterschool activities are sports, which last only a few hours two or three days a week. If a child is not athletic or if the parent cannot arrange transportation, the parent has very few options.

To solve this problem, parents should help school districts organize afterschool programs for children 12 years and older. These programs could provide tutoring and assistance with homework, as well as such activities as music, dance, or art lessons. The programs should be held at various public schools throughout the district. Volunteers from senior citizen homes, civic organizations, churches, and local businesses, as well as parents, could be trained to staff such programs. Local businesses should be encouraged to help fund the programs; grants and fund-raising projects could help cover the costs. All it takes are a handful of parents willing to take the responsibility to organize the program and manage it, and the cooperation of the local school district. Parents also can provide supervision at bus stops in order to prevent fights before and after school, as well as to keep the children safe from adults who might wish them harm.

Children do not learn what we tell them nearly as well as they learn what we show them. If there is violence in the home, if the parents react to stressful situations by losing control and becoming either verbally or physically abusive, the children will react in the same way toward their peers. If you are guilty of such behavior, get help through the various community organizations that deal with family violence. If you know of a child living in such an environment, take the risk and intervene, make a phone call, offer your home as a safe haven, or call the police.

In addition, parents can help alleviate school violence by not buying guns, or getting rid of the guns they have in their homes, or keeping them locked away. More than 40% of the households in this country contain at last one gun (Foster et al., 1987). Assaults are committed with the weapon most readily at hand. If a child gets angry at a classmate and there is a gun at home, he is more likely to bring it to school seeking revenge than to find a less violent way of settling the dispute. A teenager holding a gun is more dangerous than an adult with the same weapon. Teenagers are more willing to pull the trigger, because they do not see the far-reaching consequences of their actions or perceive death as permanent. Since 1984, the use of guns by teenagers to murder other teens has tripled, while the use of other weapons in teen homicides has declined (Fox & Pierce, 1994). Handguns are increasingly the weapon of choice among teens, and most of the guns come from their own homes.

Parents also should pay attention to the lessons their children are learning from the media. Television and movies glorify those who can shoot fast and straight. It is very rare to find a hero these days who solves his problem with his wit and wisdom. The network representatives and filmmakers keep telling us that TV and movies merely reflect what is going on in the modern world; they tell us that such depictions of graphic violence do nothing to contribute to the problem. These same media representatives conveniently ignore the fact that the same medium that has made Ronald McDonald more recognizable than Santa Claus among children is showing these same young people how to look cool and powerful while spraying bullets at one another.

What do we do about the child who sits at home alone, day after day, watching TV as children not much older than himself shoot each other? Even the best of parents cannot watch a child 24 hours a day. The only thing we can do is pressure our legislators to not listen to a group of executives who tell them that TV and movies have no impact on violence. We can contact companies that sponsor such programs and petition them to sponsor programs that provide

more positive images and role models. Sponsors listen to consumers; and when many consumers say the same thing, the sponsors listen more.

A major contributor to school violence is low self-esteem and frustration, both of which can be related to learning disabilities. From 40% to 70% of those in prison have dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, or some other form of learning disability (McGee, 1979). Children with these problems not only have difficulty learning to read, write, and do math, they also have problems understanding social cues, controlling impulsive actions, and learning rules. Sadly, fewer than 5% of those with a learning disability are diagnosed when they are children; and even fewer receive the help they need to succeed in school and in life (Shedd, 1974).

Learning disabilities, particularly those that are not severe, are often missed by parents and teachers. Most teachers have not been trained to recognize the various learning disabilities; and in today's overcrowded classrooms, there is only so much one teacher can do. Fortunately, there is a lot that parents can do. They can volunteer to read tests, to repeat instructions to those who need it, to help keep kids with attention problems on task, to give the children a hug or much-needed praise.

Parents also can help their local school develop a peer-support program. School districts throughout the country have developed programs that enlist children who are at risk for failure, dropping out, or discipline problems to be trained as peer tutors, note takers, mentors, counselors, and mediators. Working under the supervision of a teacher or trained parent, student mediators handle disputes between fellow students before they escalate to acts of violence. Peer tutors, note takers, and class mentors help fellow students, particularly those with learning difficulties, keep up with the class, thus reducing their frustration. Trained student counselors can help fellow students find solutions to their problems and alleviate the sense of isolation many children feel. Kids generally feel freer to discuss their problems with other kids, and they listen to the advice of their peers more than they do to that given by adults. These programs can go a long way toward eliminating violence in schools, and it is never too early to start them.

There is not enough time or space to list everything a parent can do to make our schools safer. The solutions are as unlimited as human creativity. You do not have to do everything listed here; you need to do just one thing, and it does not have to be big.

So get up a little earlier and walk down to your child's bus stop. Encourage other parents to do the same. Set up a parent patrol to walk the halls and playground at school. Volunteer to help in the classroom. Take someone else's child along with yours to soccer practice or piano lessons or another afterschool activity. Invite a child who is home alone to come to your house to bake cookies or make macaroni necklaces or play Scrabble. Go to your school board and find out what they are doing to curb school violence and how you can help.

Do not wait for someone else to take responsibility. We parents can turn things around. All we need are a few interested adults, cooperative school administrators, and a serious commitment to making our schools a safe place where all children can learn. The child you save may well be your own.

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What We Can Do about Gangs

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It's easy to recognize that gangs are a present-day phenomenon associated with real problems. It's not as easy to determine what we can and should do to help youth faced with these problems. A result of more than three years of searching, this chapter will summarize some well-informed suggestions from a variety of sources. The first section deals with what educators and schools can do, the second with how we can relate individually to gang members, and the third with

community and parent action that can be taken. The final portion will provide details on some useful resources the reader may want to pursue.

What can schools and educators do?

Become informed! Talk to local police or others who know about

Names of gangs and territories;

Identifiers—signs and colors; and

Members—numbers, names, characteristics, operational styles.

Ask the "straight kids"; they know

Who's intimidating and

Who's recruiting.

Use dress and discipline codes knowingly. Dress codes should exclude gang identifiers. Several New Orleans public schools have adopted school uniforms for all students there, avoiding many problems. They report that uniforms avoid students' either wearing gang colors or flaunting expensive clothing earned from illicit activity.

- Don't allow students to "represent" in school.
- Prevent and report "recruiting."
- Confiscate beepers and headphones.
- Develop clear assault and weapons policies.
- Report assault and weapons offenses.

Declare and make the school a "neutral zone" for gangs.

- Make policies public and repeat them when needed.
- Search for and destroy graffiti.

Take a stand against violence, and work to establish among students a school norm that supports that stand. One school secured anti-violent pledges from students, giving them group support for individually taking nonviolent stances in troublesome situations.

Anti-Gang Curricula

More of these materials are available to educators. For example, in 1982, schools in Paramount, California, began using a curriculum that

Shows the reality of the gang lifestyle,

Demonstrates alternatives to the gang lifestyle,

Develops self-esteem,

Provides models for dealing with peer pressure,

Gives drug abuse information,

Informs about the consequences of criminal behavior, and

Explores career opportunities.

Four evaluation studies were performed of the Paramount Plan Anti-Gang Curriculum. In summary, their results showed that before the curriculum, about 50% of students were undecided about joining gangs; after the curriculum 90% to 98% indicated an unwillingness to have anything to do with a gang. Such a curriculum must effectively deglamorize the gang lifestyle and provide realistic alternatives and support.

Schools could also include other important student curriculum components, such as

Training in problem solving and good decision making,

Prosocial skills training and values education,

Nonviolent conflict resolution methods and practice,

Education in AIDS/STD prevention and personal safety, and

Incentives and support for academic performance.

Provide relevant inservice training for teachers and school staff.

- Provide gang-related information and implications.
- Bring in neighborhood leaders for joint problem solving.
- Provide training in how to interact with gang members.

What should we remember in relating individually to a gang member?

Keep cool.

- An emotional response conveys a lack of self-control; take it easy.
- Use humor if appropriate, but never "put down" or humiliate.

Show personal respect without attempting to intimidate. Gangs place great emphasis on respect. When walking through another gang's territory, members may tilt their hat or drape their sweaters over the arm to indicate respect for the gang in that area. Members are likely to return the respect given them by adults. In *Life Space Intervention*, Wood and Long (1991) describe the following useful framework for talking respectfully with youth in crisis.

Remember not to threaten. Threats do not work. Gang members feel powerful and everlasting. Most members are likely to say what one Cleveland member said when told he was likely going to end up getting shot: "Not me; I won't get hurt." And if threatened with disciplinary action, they may well "up the ante" with a greater threat or demonstrate that our threats are empty ones.

Be someone who cares, but don't come on as a therapist. Relationships are important, but degrees are "a laugh" to gang members. If asked, "What's happening?" they may tell you about their concerns. If asked to talk about their feelings, they are likely to quit talking. Make your caring sincere; students have excellent "phoniness detectors." Listen well.

Point out what youth pay for what they get from gang membership. The economic and protective benefits of gangs are difficult to dispute, but the loss of personal independence may not be clear to them. As Nick Long said to some PEP (Positive Education Program) staff and students, "once you're in a gang, they own you. You've gone back to slavery. Nothing in a gang is free, and no one in a gang is independent. Join a gang and they've won; you got beat!"

Don't be afraid to be appropriately assertive. In the gang arena, fear invites intimidation. After a two-year study of Ohio youth gangs, C. Ronald Huff (1989) put it this way:

> *Contrary to much "common wisdom," teachers who demonstrate that they care about a youth and then are firm and fair in their expectations are rarely, if ever, the victims of assaults by gang members. Rather, it is those teachers who "back down" and are easily intimidated who are more likely to be the victims of assault. During*

> *two years of interviews, not one gang member ever said that a teacher who insisted on academic performance (within the context of a caring relationship) was assaulted. Such teachers are respected far more than those perceived as "weak," and "weakness" generally represents a quality to be exploited by gang members in an almost Darwinian fashion, much as they select targets on the street. (p. 531)*

Many individuals lack assertive responses in situations where they are needed; rather, they progress from passive to aggressive behavior, both of which are unproductive. If appropriate assertiveness is a problem for you, obtain some assertiveness training. But remember that being assertive does not mean acting tough. Acting tough presents a challenge for counter-aggressive action from students, and only makes things worse.

Instead, use the Conflict Cycle (Long, 1979) to analyze behavior in a situation and to choose how to respond so as not to escalate a problem. The Conflict Cycle suggests we try to understand the youth's view of himself (or herself) and how the world operates. Then we can better predict the youth's feelings and interpret his or her observable behavior following a stressful incident. This information can help us react in ways which do not confirm the youth's expectations and thus avoid reinforcing his or her inappropriate behavior in that situation.

Don't ask them to do things they cannot do. Asking a student to pursue an unrealistic goal is likely to blow an adult's credibility. We cannot ask a member (or recruit) to leave (or not join) a gang when following our advice will probably get him or her killed. We may help find ways to minimize gang involvement and to seek other support. Likewise, when setting academic expectations, we must make sure tasks are feasible for individual students and provide face-saving assistance where it is needed. Students are more likely to cause trouble and less likely to cooperate if academic demands are either too high or too low for them.

Allow students choices which enable them to save face. Maintaining the respect of their peers and, therefore, their self-respect are constant primary objectives of gang members. Any other person who humiliates them is violating their integrity and therefore creating enemies.

What can citizens and parents do?

Citizens can join together to act on their concerns about gangs. A great deal can be done together, but action requires unity and courage. According to a Chicago Police Department paper, "a street gang is only as strong as the commu-

nity or neighborhood permits it to be." But remember, the first step in solving a problem is acknowledging that there is a problem. Community awareness is a critical first step if you expect to bring people together to meet a need.

Contacting sources of gang information can provide leads to places where citizen action has paid off. For example, the city of Paramount, California, paired its anti-gang school curriculum with neighborhood meetings for parents—providing parents and citizens with information, resources, support, and positive contact with law officers. Cleveland, Ohio, has established a gang hotline for anyone with a gang-related question or concern. A wide variety of information and community resource contacts may be obtained through such hotlines.

Community agents can help an individual relocate if moving is what is required to leave a gang. If asked, individuals and groups in the community may well agree to fund action which helps a youth or family escape gang entrapment. Some communities have plastic surgeons who volunteer their services to remove gang identifying tattoos for individuals seeking to leave the group.

High-risk target areas can be identified by locating the zip codes where there are disproportionate numbers of prison commitments, correctional placements, mental health residential placements, and residents on public assistance. In order to reduce the vulnerability of these areas to gangs, services should be provided which strengthen families and social institutions and which improve job opportunities. Organize campaigns to call or write local or national legislators; inform them of the problem and let them know what you expect them to do about it.

Neighborhood individuals, churches, community agencies, and social groups can work together with schools, parents, and law-enforcement agencies. A note of warning from a Chicago police officer—members of the Guardian Angels (neighborhood self-protective groups) can be gang "disciples" (low-level involvement gang members), who can keep the gang informed of community activities and allow gang members access and protection when requested.

The influx of national drug-based affiliations has made the problem a national, state, and community issue. Citizens need to look for positive action which can be taken at each of these levels. One critical action is to inform your legislators, both about the problem and about some of the helpful plans of action that other communities have implemented.

Parents have some options. Caring parents can find hope in community support. They can be encouraged to take the following steps:

- Spend time with their kids and find out what happens after school. work to build and keep trust, a "you can tell me anything" relationship. (Such a relationship cannot last, however, if parents make demands they cannot enforce, such as "You are going to get out of that gang!") Make sure each child has someone to talk to.
- Dress children in "safe" clothing. If they go to school wearing gang colors, they may be victimized. Don't purchase clothing in gang colors; often this includes college or professional sports team wear which has been "adopted" by a gang. Make sure parents are informed about the specifics of gang dress in their community.
- Check their home for gang signs and symbols; flipping mattresses can be a good idea. Parents can be encouraged to call police if they see anything suspicious (such as beepers, ammunition, or gang identifiers).
- Never permit youth to hold or attend unchaperoned parties. Notify police ahead of parties. Parents can arrange for several male adults to be present. They can send out invitations to be collected at the door. They should check washrooms for hidden contraband, such as alcohol or drugs.
- Monitor what children and youth watch on television, and monitor the movies they see. Parents can select some programs and place limits on viewing. They also need to talk with children about violence in entertainment media. Children need to discuss with adults the fact that violence in television entertainment is not reality. Violence as a means of getting what one wants needs to be actively de-glamorized by trusted adults, since it is presented as highly glamorous in most media.

Work with your police officers and value their jobs. Youth (and adults) learn to view law enforcement officials in stereotypical ways from the people around them, as well as from the media. Find positive ways to bring citizens into contact with police officers, and demonstrate productive problem solving with them about your community's needs. Let police know you are willing to join with them in acting preventively. Make sure your verbal references to law enforcement and your behavior with officers provide constructive models to others.

Let media sources know what you expect from them. We are inundated with movies and television programs that provide increasingly violent and graphic

entertainment and news. Despite massive evidence of their destructive influence on our nation's children and adults, these media still account for major portions of our citizens' leisure time. Let your local stations, national networks, major movie production companies, and sponsoring businesses know what you think and what you want them to do. Contact them both as an individual and jointly with citizen groups.

Make sure prosocial peer group opportunities are available. Children and youth need identification, security, and activities which compete with less desirable options. Work to provide community youth organizations which have busy schedules of activities and prosocial adult models. Encourage Boy Scout troops, church youth groups, prosocial clubs, and arts or special interest groups to which students can belong. Use school facilities as community centers where productive social contacts can be made, and make sure security is present. Keep kids busy with productive activity!

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Materials from the Chicago Police Department (1988) and the Cleveland, Ohio, Task Force on Violent Crime (1990 and 1991) were also used in the research for this chapter.

PART III: TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHERS

Techniques for Reducing School Violence

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Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law, respect everyone; but if someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery.

—Malcolm X, *Malcolm X Speaks* (1965)

Today's youth feel that they must "save face." If adults are going to stop violent confrontations, they must be adroit in maneuvering these situations so that no youths feel they have been "put down." Those adults who are successful in redirecting violent confrontations show the following characteristics:

1. *Positive Attitude*: Everyone responds more readily to an attitude of acceptance than one of rejection. One can be stern and still maintain a positive attitude.

2. *Respectful*: Students must perceive that they are respected by the adult handling the conflict.

3. *Tolerant*: Students will follow suggestions more readily if they believe that the person making the suggestions accepts them as a person.

4. *Empathetic:* Teachers must show empathy for the student's perception of a conflict, regardless of how insignificant that conflict appears to the mediator.

5. *Supportive:* If students are to accept any decision, they must believe that the teacher supports them personally.

6. *Attentive:* Students experiencing conflict must be allowed to express themselves. Teachers must be active listeners.

Teachers who demonstrate these characteristics will find that they can restore harmony to their classrooms and prevent further conflicts. However, teachers who ignore these characteristics and employ an authoritarian approach seldom will be successful when dealing with student conflicts.

Classroom Preventive Strategies

In many cases, classroom situations escalate into violent confrontations between student and student or teacher and student because teachers have not acquired a repertoire of preventive strategies. Experienced teachers have cited the following techniques as helpful in maintaining classroom decorum:

1. *Display class rules.* Students should see the class rules displayed prominently on the bulletin board or wall. In addition, allow the students an opportunity to determine the classroom rules. Keep these rules simple and list only the important ones. Students have difficulty in remembering a legion of rules.

2. *Plan lessons carefully.* Teachers must plan properly for the daily lesson. When students are bored or idle, there is the opportunity to misbehave. Horseplay has a tendency to turn quickly into violence.

3. *Show enthusiasm.* When students see that their teacher is enthusiastic about a subject, they will react with similar behavior. When even the teacher seems not to care about a subject, the students will begin to find ways to amuse themselves, such as hitting the student in front of them or saying some agitating remark *sotto voce* to their neighbor. The reactions to those actions can escalate rapidly into violence.

4. *Be observant.* Students who believe that all their actions are observed by their teacher will not be tempted to disrupt the class. The classroom should be arranged so that the teacher easily can see all the students.

5. *Stay close to the students.* It is difficult for a teacher to maintain classroom discipline while constantly sitting behind a desk or standing rigidly in one location. Verbal directives issued across the room have little effect on the recalcitrant student. The physical presence of a teacher circulating about the classroom while teaching improves not only discipline, but the learning process as well.

6. *Provide individual attention.* The teacher who gives individual attention to students will reduce the time spent off task. Often a student will have difficulty beginning an assigned task, or a student will let his or her mind wander from the assignment. A small amount of individual instruction from the teacher will encourage these students to resume work.

Peer Mediators in Secondary Schools

When teachers mediate a conflict, one of the students may feel betrayed because the teacher treated him or her unfairly. When the teacher rules against a student, that student may view himself or herself as a loser. This belief could result in future retaliations against other students or the teacher.

One method for avoiding this situation is to use other students as peer mediators. Students can be successful mediators because they can converse easily and relate experientially with their peers. Student mediation also allows the students to experience responsibility and self-regulation. A successful student mediation program will free the classroom teacher and assistant principal from routine arbitration and allow them to concentrate on instruction.

Akari and Takeshita (1991) defined student mediators as

> *facilitators who help disputants settle their own problems in a mutually gainful manner. They do not act as a counselor, judge, lawyer, or advice giver; they remain neutral and treat people and problems with respect as they take the disputants through the process—from stating the problem to writing the agreement.*

The key words in the definition are "mutually gainful manner." When both parties to a dispute reach consensus on the resolution, both parties believe themselves to be winners. Thus, the incentive for retaliation will be negligible.

It is necessary to establish a framework for any student mediation program. The following guidelines should be included in this framework:

1. The problems to be mediated should be limited to interpersonal conflicts, such as fights, hostile looks, tale bearing, etc.
2. Problems must be resolved in compliance with campus and district regulations.
3. Severe discipline problems, such as drugs, weapons, assault, etc., will not be referred for student mediation.
4. Mediators must learn not to take personally any negative comments made by the students in conflict.
5. Mediators must learn to give constructive feedback, both positive and negative, to the disputing parties.
6. Mediators must not succumb to peer pressure when rendering a decision.
7. Mediators must learn the art of compromise.
8. Mediators must maintain decorum within the mediation room during a conference.
9. Mediators must suggest possible solutions to the dispute.
10. Mediators must remain impartial.

In the secondary school, cases are presented in a legal setting. The participants learn the mechanics of the judicial system in addition to resolving disputes. Students in some middle schools are being taught mediation by members of the legal profession. In Houston, law students visit schools and conduct classes for students in mediation. These classes give the students a positive view of the judicial system and allow students to interact with positive role models.

Peer Mediators in Elementary Schools

Student mediators in the elementary school require more extensive training than those at the secondary level because of their emotional and intellectual immaturity. A classroom teacher should select three or four students who are more mature and have more developed higher-order thinking skills. After thorough training, these students are introduced to the class as the mediators. A possible introduction to the program might be:

> *Class, today we are going to discuss a new plan for solving any disagreements among yourselves. Instead of my deciding between you*

when you disagree, we are going to allow some of your classmates to assist you in reaching a decision that will be acceptable to all of you. When you have a disagreement with anyone in here, you may talk with Mary, Dolores, Glenn, or Joe. They will help you talk about your problem, and all of you can reach an agreement about a solution to your problem. These students will be around the playground and in the lunchroom to assist you with any disagreements you are having with your classmates.

Initially, the teacher will need to monitor elementary students during the sessions. However, students are resourceful; and it will not be long before they can conduct the sessions alone.

The Conflict Resolution Curriculum

Conflict resolution is being introduced into the curriculum studies of many school districts. The art of conflict resolution must be learned, and schools are seeking to teach this skill to their students. The objective of the lessons is to empower the students to reach a solution to their problems in a nonviolent manner, thus becoming part of the solution instead of part of the problem.

In many secondary schools, the counseling staff prepares and presents the lessons. The concepts also could be incorporated easily within the regular lesson in such courses as social studies, health, and home economics. In elementary schools, the lessons can be woven easily into the fabric of the classroom day.

The following might be included in the topics to be discussed in a conflict resolution curriculum:

1. *Origins of conflict.* Conflict occurs when two or more persons differ over a question of values, goals, priorities, taste, or opinion. Students must understand that conflict usually originates when persons are unable to accept these differences.

2. *Productive and nonproductive conflict.* Students should be aware that when two or more persons communicate, there will usually be areas of conflict. However, this conflict can be pointed in a constructive direction, rather than a destructive or nonproductive direction. For example, if a group is planning a new program, differing opinions (or conflict) can result in a better program.

3. *Types of arguments.* The three types of arguments—primary, secondary, and ad hominem—should be explained to students. *Primary arguments* involve values or predetermined decisions and usually are unresolvable. *Secondary arguments* do not include value statements and can be resolved. *Ad hominem* arguments include a personal attack on one of the parties, thus removing any hope of resolution. Students need to realize that there are some arguments that will never be resolved. They also should understand that an irrational, emotional argument often will end in violence.

4. *Normalcy of anger.* Anger is a normal emotion and should be expressed; however, it may be constructive or destructive. Students must learn techniques for using anger positively.

5. *Resolution strategies.* These are the critical aspects of the conflict resolution curriculum. If a conflict resolution program is to be successful, it must teach students to resolve conflicts.

Among the conflict resolution techniques that students should learn are

1. *Active listening.* An active listener recognizes that a statement has several meanings and will seek to translate the statement in the correct context.

2. *Expression of feelings.* Students must be taught to express their feelings without aggression.

3. *Tolerance training.* Students must learn to be tolerant of others.

4. *Problem solving.* Students must actively seek solutions to problems instead of just "giving up."

5. *Successful decision making.* Decisions must allow both persons to save face and have a perception of winning.

6. *Creative negotiating.* Students should practice negotiation exercises to develop creative methods of achieving collaborative harmony.

Among the methods that are useful for teaching these strategies are brainstorming, role playing, class discussions, video presentations, and collaborative grouping. There are commercially prepared programs and curriculum guides that provide assistance for those starting a conflict resolution curriculum.

Teacher Mentoring

Another method for preventing conflict in schools is to assign a teacher to mentor any student who seems to be susceptible to violence. Other students also should be allowed to volunteer for the program. The mentor provides support, insight, and experience to the student. This should be considered a constructive activity rather than a prescriptive measure.

A teacher mentor can help students achieve greater self-esteem. Many students perform negative actions in an attempt to achieve recognition; thus, the presence of a mentor would alleviate the need for such behaviors. In addition, the mentor would serve as a successful role model for the student. School mentors are not restricted to the teaching or administrative staff. Paraprofessionals, teacher aides, custodians, cafeteria personnel, or any other adult employed at the school could serve in a mentoring capacity. A staff member might wish to mentor a group of students and have a weekly rap session to discuss concerns.

One method for implementing a mentoring program is the "Adopt-a-Student" campaign. Before the first day of school, students who need personal assistance are identified. Names and profiles of each student (with photographs, if available) are placed in the main office or the teacher's lounge, and mentors choose the students with whom they would like to work. The mentor and the adopted student are introduced at a reception early in the school year, and the students are encouraged to contact their mentors when needed. Near the end of the school year, a reception is held for the students and their mentors.

Possible guidelines for mentors include the following:

1. Designate a specific time each week to meet with the student.
2. Encourage the student to seek assistance at any time.
3. Inquire about the student's academic progress each week.
4. Be an empathic, nonjudgmental listener.
5. Provide enthusiastic encouragement and support.

Peer Mentoring

Youth need acceptance and recognition, which is one reason that many join gangs. An energetic peer mentoring program can provide students with a positive alternative. One of the most powerful influences on the behavior of any

teenager is another teenager, and schools can help peers provide a constructive influence.

In the elementary school, teachers can pair students as "study buddies." In the secondary school, the student partners can be determined by the counselor, teachers, or some activity sponsor, such as the Honor Society. The peer mentors can meet with their protégés during a homeroom period, at lunch, before school, or after school. These interactions can even continue outside the school environment if the students wish.

Schools also can establish a "peer pal" program. These students greet new students enrolling in the school and help them acclimate to the school environment. Secondary school students especially benefit from this program, because they often have a sense of anger and isolation when they are thrust into a new school environment. Many schools also have used peer escorts, who volunteer to escort potential students on tours around the campus. In addition, peer advisors can discuss employment and college scholarship opportunities with their peers after receiving the information from the guidance counselors.

The mentoring relationship is beneficial to all students because it allows each to achieve greater self-actualization and higher self-esteem. In addition, the protégés perceive the school as more personal and humanistic and assume greater ownership of the school. With this assumption of school ownership, the students will become more successful and less disruptive.

Mentoring by Community Leaders

Mentoring activities need not be restricted to the school. Many schools have formed partnerships with area businesses that include mentoring activities. Business leaders introduce students to the world of work by providing them with simple responsibilities at the business site. The students gain the satisfaction of successful job performance while increasing their awareness of future career opportunities. In addition, business leaders who serve as mentors provide positive role models and encourage academic achievement while discouraging violent, disruptive behaviors.

Opportunities for mentorship should be extended beyond business hours to the entire community. The following programs are just a few examples of those that can involve the larger community:

1. *Culture mentoring.* These programs help students learn about cultures other than their own. Community leaders serve as mentors to students from a different ethnic group to provide insights on the similarities and differences between the two cultures. For example, members of the Chinese community might serve as mentors to students of another culture to teach them about Chinese culture.

2. *Intergenerational mentoring.* These programs can work in several ways. That is, students serve as mentors at nursing homes, hospitals, or in private homes to provide companionship to older, confined adults; or they serve as mentors to younger students. Senior citizens can visit nursery schools or elementary schools and entertain or tutor younger children. Everyone involved in such programs can achieve a greater understanding and a sense of fulfillment from the interaction.

Parent-School Partnership Programs

Many students live in households where violent behavior is considered the norm. The parents in such families would benefit from the same nonviolent intervention programs being presented to their offspring. In addition, many young parents need the skills to cope with rebellious teenagers. Programs that provide these skills improve the probability that the cycle of aggression in many homes will be broken and future generations will be protected from its threat.

Schools can provide parenting classes that focus on minimizing child violence by using preventive measures. Some suggestions to parents for minimizing the potential for violence in their children might be to

1. *Treat children nonviolently.* Children treat others according to what they have observed and experienced at home. If parents wish to have nonviolent children, they must use respectful, nonviolent methods for communication and discipline. Parents who strike their children are delivering a message that it is acceptable to use aggression against others.

2. *Model nonviolent expressions of anger.* Demonstrate to children constructive methods to "let off steam," such as hitting a punching bag, going for a walk, or jogging. Parents should refrain from such overt expressions of anger as slamming down the telephone, slamming a door, banging pots and pans, or using violent language. Parents should avoid arguing in front of the children.

3. *Include nonviolent programs in family activities.* Family outings should not all have a violent theme, such as boxing, wrestling, or watching movies that glorify violence. There is nothing inherently bad in any of those activities; however, when these become the family's primary focus, the children may be encouraged to perform more violent acts.

4. *Encourage nonviolent hobbies.* Parents should encourage students to participate in nonviolent hobbies and extracurricular activities, such as playing a musical instrument, collecting baseball cards or stamps, raising animals, or reading.

5. *Forbid the purchase of violent products.* Parents should monitor the products purchased by their children, even when purchased with the child's own money. Encourage them to make wise consumer decisions regarding their purchases.

6. *Limit television and movie viewing.* Young viewers of violent shows become desensitized to the suffering of others. Encourage and guide children into selecting programs and movies that portray characters behaving peacefully toward others.

7. *Teach responsibility for actions.* Teach children that nobody can make them do anything; they always have a choice about their responses and are ultimately responsible for them. Often, the perpetrators of violent acts will blame their victims or someone else for their deeds.

8. *Teach nonviolent conflict strategies.* Children need to learn at an early age that aggression is not the preferred solution to a conflict. A preschool child should be taught to share her toys with her playmates without violence. Often the children who obtain toys and dominate play by aggression are the ones who will resort to violence when they are teenagers.

Collaborative efforts between parents and the school can help decrease the violence performed by students. When students perceive that there is a concentrated, cooperative effort being exerted by their parents and their school toward them, they no longer have the need to act in a violent manner to receive attention.

Involve the Community

A coalition of educators, community leaders, and parents who are dedicated to the eradication of violence in the schools and community should prove for-

midable. All who are involved in this effort should recognize that each has a specific role in the program to combat school violence.

If there is a college or university nearby, the faculty, administrators, and students all should be involved in the effort to prevent violence. For example, college students could provide tutorial services for elementary and secondary students. Sororities and fraternities could adopt a class at an elementary school and provide mentoring and outings for the students. The positive interaction with college students will provide at-risk students with good role models.

College faculty can invite at-risk students to visit the campus and participate in academic activities, which would provide a vision of future possibilities and give the students an incentive to seek college admission. Students participating in such programs would have little time to direct their attention to violent aggression, because they would be involved in creative activities.

The clergy can be very supportive of the school. Churches frequently sponsor worthwhile activities for youth, and the clergy can provide counseling services on a volunteer basis on the school campus. Often, clergy who are present on the campus are a deterrent to violence.

Police departments can cooperate with schools to make sure that students attend school. At a middle school in Houston, Texas, for example, constables volunteer their time to make house calls informing parents of their child's absence from school. The attendance rate at that school has risen dramatically because of the constables' efforts. In addition, police can make presentations about drugs to students and community groups. When students observe the police on campus in a positive setting, they develop respect for law enforcement.

Parents can participate in school forums on a variety of topics. These programs, which should be held on Saturdays or in the evenings, help parents develop closer relationships with the school.

Adults living in the neighborhood of elementary schools could be solicited to volunteer their homes as "safe houses" where children can go if they are threatened while walking to and from school. These homes can have signs posted that designate them as safe houses. However, the volunteers should be screened carefully before including them in such a program.

Community and business leaders could donate prizes and money to support a program to reward students for good behavior. Such items as pizza parties, T-shirts, fast-food coupons, or other prizes could be awarded to students.

School violence is a community issue. Solving this problem requires the efforts of the entire community. When educators, community leaders, and parents join together in a concerted effort to stop violence, they will achieve success.

Mediating Power Struggles between Students

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This article is excerpted from *What Do I Do When . . .? How to Achieve Discipline with Dignity in the Classroom* by Allen N. Mendler, Ph.D., published by National Educational Service, 1992.

During the course of a 180-day or longer school year, there are likely to be disagreements, disputes, and interpersonal problems which arise between students. Many such disputes respond well to mediation. Children as young as fourth grade have been trained to be school mediators. Many teachers can become mediators in helping students resolve their disputes. When problems arise, the students involved have the option of meeting wtih a mediator, who helps them find a solution. Mediators need to have good listening skills and know how to get people talking to each other rather than at each other. Look at a process we developed several years ago for disputes between teachers and students that has been easily adapted for peer mediation.

In this process, the mediator is called a "Coach." It is the Coach's job to keep communication flowing between the aggrieved parties and help them find a workable solution. The steps are as follows:

1. Coach introduces himself to both students.
2. Coach asks each student to take his turn describing what the other did that he resented, disliked, or made him feel angry.
3. Coach asks each student to repeat to the other what was said to ensure understanding.
4. Coach asks both students to say what they like about each other or what they think other people like about that person.
5. Coach asks each student to repeat to the other what was said to ensure understanding.

6. Coach asks each student to say what he wants the other to do differently that will solve the problem.
7. Each student repeats the other person's demands.
8. Coach asks each student who will do each of the desired things.
9. Each student repeats what he is willing to do, as well as listening to what the other person is willing to do, and an agreement is reached.
10. Students shake hands, put the agreement in writing (optional), and agree on a follow-up date within a week to make sure that the agreement is working.

The following example illustrates these steps in resolving a fight between two students.

COACH: Both of you wanted to get together because of the fight yesterday. My job is to help you guys figure out what else you can do to not fight and not get into trouble. Now, Pat, tell Laval what he did or what he does that bugs you. Laval, I just want you to listen for now. You'll get your chance soon.

PAT: He called my mother a name on the playground and took my books.

COACH: Tell Laval. Talk to him.

PAT: I don't like you calling my mother names and messing with my books.

COACH (*to Laval*): Just to make sure you understand, tell Pat what he just told you.

LAVAL: You don't like it when I call your mother names and take your books.

COACH: Okay. Now, you tell Pat what he does or did that bugged you.

LAVAL: You don't ever play with me, and you and a few other kids you are with keep making fun of me. You make faces and sometimes pick on me.

COACH (*to Pat*): What doesn't he like?

PAT: He doesn't like when I make faces and pick on him with my friends, even though I don't.

LAVAL: You do too.

COACH: You don't have to agree with everything you hear just so long as you each listen. And you are both doing a good job of that. Now, Pat, tell Laval what he does that you like or what you think others like about him.

PAT: You share your lunch sometimes, and your Nintendo with other kids, but never with me. I like it when you don't cut in front of me in line.

COACH (*to Laval*): What does he like?

(Laval repeats back.)

COACH: Now, Laval, tell Pat what you or others like about him.

LAVAL: I think you are smart and good at baseball. The other kids always want to be friends with you.

COACH (*to Pat*): What does he like?

(Pat repeats back.)

COACH: Okay, now, you each know what you don't like and what you do. What are each of you willing to do so that there won't be any more fighting?

PAT: Well, I make faces at you because you never share your Nintendo or invite me to play. So I'd like you to play Nintendo with me, and then I won't make faces or get my friends to bug you.

LAVAL: I'd like to play ball with you even though I'm not very good. I'd like you and your friends to eat lunch with me sometimes.

PAT: Okay, how about three times a week you can eat lunch with us and I'll pick you next time we play ball to be on my team?

LAVAL: Well, if you want to play Nintendo, you can either play it with me at school or come over to my house after.

COACH: So what is each of you guys agreeing to do?

(Pat and Laval repeat the agreement.)

COACH: Sounds like a good agreement. (He summarizes.) Let's meet together next week to make sure that the agreement is working.

(Pat and Laval shake hands.)

One mediation session is sometimes sufficient to facilitate an agreement. Some disputes seem as intractable as the Arab-Israeli conflict and require multiple meetings. When there are many areas of conflict, it is fine to accept small agreements. Developing a mutual plan that works may mean that each small success provides motivation for the next.

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Situation

What can I do about this violence in kids? It is really getting to me. I teach second grade and have been physically struck by a few kids on more than one occasion. One kid actually accused me of hitting him. But what is even worse is that the boy's father got involved and told my my principal that he wanted his son to "beat the hell out of anybody who is trying to beat the hell out of him." While this father was especially frightening, it is commonplace for kids to tell me that their mother, father, or both tell them to solve their problems by hitting. While I'm trying to teach, their parents are telling them that fighting is okay. I am exasperated and just don't know how to go about handling this.

Analysis/Solution

Fighting cannot and must not be tolerated at school. We must establish the school as a safety zone. Learning, curiosity, and achievement cannot thrive when students fear for their safety. We live in a culture that glorifies, if not encourages, violent solutions to problems, and the media often exploit violence when poor modeling exists at home. That makes our job more difficult. Despite all of this, there are many things you can do to address this problem.

Some children claim that their parents tell them to fight back because it is an answer which often leaves us speechless. It is used as a good excuse. It is often sufficient to tell the child that unless the fighting stops, you will be calling home to arrange a conference so that you and the child's parent can discuss this issue. If violence persists, meet with the parent and approach the issue respectfully but directly. Tell the parent: "José tells me that his mom says that if anybody hits him, he is to hit them back immediately, even of this happens in school. Is José understanding you correctly?" Quite often the parent will either deny or clarify that this is what was meant. This can lead to a good discussion of what messages the parent is trying to convey to the child and then some ways of doing it more clearly.

If the child's parent(s) support or encourage fighting, you will need to come to a meeting of the minds with them. Your best bet is to approach the issue in a clear, non-judgmental tone. Acknowledge with the parent that sometimes fighting in life may be necessary, but that in school it cannot be tolerated because it interferes with children getting an adequate education. You can say: "I understand that you want Jamal to stand up for himself so that bullies don't pick on him. But Jamal needs to understand that school is a place for learning, and for learning to happen, all children, including Jamal, need to feel safe. Jamal is a capable child who can really be successful in school with the right kind of help.

He needs us to work together. I'm trying to teach the children how to solve their problems with their brains rather than their fists. Can I count on your help?" Proceed to explain some alternatives to violence that you are teaching.

You may need to "teach" the parent. In some instances, teachers have been successful making the analogy between school and the workplace. You might explain: "The goal of getting a good education is to get a good job. I'll bet that you'd like to see that some day for Jamal. Now tell me, what do you think would happen if you or another adult punched the boss or a co-worker because you became angry with him at work? Before you answer, just suppose that the boss or co-worker had been mean and said nasty things before you punched him. What do you think would happen?" Most parents can see that they would probably lose their jobs even if they had been provoked to anger by someone else. You can conclude with: "I see this classroom as Jamal's workplace, and he needs to learn better ways to handle himself when others make him angry."

In a few cases, it is clear that you will not be successful in influencing the parent. You may not even be able to get in contact with the child's parent or caregiver. In these instances, you should clearly communicate your expectations to the student. You can say: "That must be confusing. Your mama tells you to fight, and I tell you that you can't. I'm sure your mama has her reasons, and there may be some good ones for fighting outside of school." (You might offer some of these possible reasons so that the student senses understanding from you.) "But in school we do not fight. Instead we solve our problems by telling how we feel, by writing down our angry thoughts, and even by going to the 'chill' corner to cool down when we need to. Which of these solutions would you like to use the next time you feel angry?"

One of the goals of "Discipline with Dignity" is the "prevention" of discipline problems. Children who fight or otherwise misbehave frequently are often lacking adequate social skills. They need alternatives and opportunities to practice new skills, and feedback about how they are doing with their new behavior. They need patience and an understanding that behavior changes slowly. They need to learn peacemaking and nonviolent conflict resolution. They can benefit from seeing their teacher frustrated or angry and watching as she finds a nonviolent, dignified way of resolving her issues. We believe that when you want to take a behavior away from someone, you must consider an alternative to put in its place. Be sure to have rules which tell children what they can do as well as what they cannot. Demonstrate, model, and explain what rules look like and sound like when they are broken or followed.

My colleague, Jim Fay, noted educator, author, and former principal, advises that when the problem is violence and involves more than one person, the aggressors should be confronted with the following assignment:

(a) Why do you think there is a "No Fighting" rule in the school?

(b) Do you think we should keep it?

(c) Why don't you see teachers or principals slugging kids in school? (Be careful about asking this one if your school endorses corporal punishment.)

The student aggressors are expected to jointly discuss and answer these questions. As one might predict, this process often cools down the parties, helps them see their behavior in a broader context, and gets them to work together cooperatively to solve a problem.

Finally, problems such as fighting can often be successfully resolved by involving the class as decision-makers. We have found the following sequence to be a very effective way of accomplishing this:

1. *Identify the problem.* "Sometimes fighting goes on in the school. I'll bet that one reason why kids fight is because other kids call you names, or worse, they call your mama names. Has anyone ever heard someone say, 'Your mama (your mutha) _____!'?"

2. *Get 'em thinking.* "Why do you think someone would call you or your mama a name? What reaction are they trying to get?" (It is common for children or teenagers to most often mention anger and getting them in trouble.)

3. *Does it work? Is it worth the hassle?* Explore with your students whether fighting usually puts an end to the problem or usually just keeps problems going. Even if it does "work," is the person who called your mama a name worth getting into trouble over?

4. *Exploring alternatives.* "Let's think of all the things we can say or do other than hit when someone tries to get us to fight." Write these down. Encourage the students to be as specific as possible. You can offer your ideas here as well. We have found that kids need to know and practice different "lines" that they can say when they are provoked. Some neutral ones that they usually will not think of but which you can offer are:

(a) "You must have the wrong mama."

(b) "You really make me mad, and I'd like to rearrange your face. But you ain't worth getting into trouble for."

(c) "That's an interesting opinion."

(d) "I'm sorry you feel that way about my mama. I'll bet your mama is nice."

(e) "You're just trying to make me mad probably because you're unhappy. I hope you feel better. Let me know if I can help."

5. *Seek good solutions.* Have students either in small groups or as a class evaluate each of the solutions to decide which are most likely to solve the problem. Post all of the "good" solutions in a place for everyone to see.

6. *Each student makes a plan.* Challenge all students to come up with a plan which has at least three things that each one will do before they either fight back verbally or physically. Some students may need more structure from you, and you can list several "good" solutions from which they each pick three. They should each share their plan with you.

Nourishing the Sense of Self in School-Age Children in an Effort to Stop Violence in Schools

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Children are introduced to violence at very early ages. They are influenced by many sources: television, peers, broken homes, physical and mental abuses. Because the problem of violence in the United States goes far beyond the classroom, it cannot be solved only by considering what takes place there. However, teachers and parents can follow a number of specific guidelines to help students resolve conflicts.

Teachers can help children understand the problems that cause their conflicts, and they must teach in terms that make sense to the children. For young children, this means helping them define their problems in terms of physical objects and concrete actions (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992). Teachers must show children that their problems have two sides. It is difficult for young children to understand this on their own; but teachers can help children see the whole prob-

lem and how their behavior contributed to it. After a conflict occurs, they can help children look at the specific actions that led to the problem and the effects that the children's actions had on escalating the conflict (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992).

Teachers must recast conflicts in a creative way so that children cooperate in finding a solution. For example, teachers can show pictures of conflict situations to young children. With each picture, the teacher asks questions to encourage discussion, such as "What do you think is the problem here?" "How might they solve it so that they're both happy?" "What could they say to each other?" In discussions such as these, children benefit greatly from hearing each other's ideas, as well as those of the teacher. As the children discover more ideas about resolving conflict, they will accumulate a larger repertoire of skills that they can try in conflicts among themselves (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992).

Much of the violence occurring in schools is connected with the rise in gang activity. Educators must be ready to deal with gangs when they enter the school. By following the guidelines outlined below, educators can help prevent gang violence.

Be knowledgeable. School personnel should become familiar with the symbols, terms, and phrases often employed as identifiers by gangs and often mimicked by youngsters who are not gang members (Cantrell & Cantrell, 1992). Provide teachers and school staff with inservice training about gangs, their appeal to children, and the implications of gang activity.

Join forces with community leaders, police, and parents. Talk with local police, especially those who most frequently deal with youth violence. Find others in your community who know about local gangs and can share critical information (Cantrell & Cantrell, 1992).

Implement special curricula in all grades. Schools should adapt or develop an anti-gang curriculum, such as that used in the Paramount, California, schools (West & Ostos, 1982). That curriculum focuses on showing what a gang lifestyle is really like, providing alternatives to gang membership, developing self-esteem, teaching skills for dealing with peer pressure, giving drug abuse information, describing the consequences of criminal behavior, and exploring career opportunities.

Treat each student with respect. Humor often can work to defuse a tense situation, although "put-down" humor may be counterproductive (Cantrell & Cantrell, 1992).

Make your school a safe haven. Guns have become a part of students' everyday lives. A 1992 study of fifth-, seventh-, and ninth-graders in Cleveland found that 22% of the boys possessed their own guns, and their reasons reflected many of the attractions of gang membership: excitement, power, safety, and the use of aggression to solve problems and respond to insults (Shapiro, 1993). A school also may be ripe for gang intrusion if it has become, or has the potential to be, a marketplace for drugs (Vrcan, 1988).

Schools that wish to become safe havens must focus on the attributes of a democracy. Among these attributes are a firm, positive sense of self as an effective person, so that individuals do not feel the need to put others down in order to feel like somebody; respect for others, regardless of whether or not one agrees with or approves of their views and ways; the ability to see a situation from another person's point of view; and the preference for negotiating disagreements and resolving conflicts nonviolently (Greenberg, 1992).

To gain additional perspectives on the problem of school violence and what educators can do to solve it, several interviews were conducted with a police officer, an assistant principal, and a resource teacher in several parishes in Louisiana. The following questions were asked:

1. What are some peaceful solutions schools can use for grades K–8 in combating violence?

   Sheriff: Schools can involve parents in social problems, reinforcing good behavior. They can provide remediation of academic difficulties. Students can be taught classroom skills, basic interaction skills, "getting along" skills, "making friends" skills, and coping skills. Schools can provide in-school suspensions.

   Assistant Principal: Advocate "talk-it-out" settings before fighting is the choice. Have an adult available who will listen and help students solve problems nonviolently.

   Resource Teacher: Schools have to get the community involved in the everyday operation of the school. Having parents at the school shows their kids that they really care, and they are good role models. Parents can be monitors in the hall, cafeteria, or at any activity.

2. What are the major causes of violence in schools for K–8 grades?

Sheriff: The major causes of violence are ineffective parenting, antisocial behavior, academic failure, peer rejection, [belonging to a] deviant peer group, and delinquency.

Assistant Principal: Low self-esteem of students, television violence, survival in the environment.

Resource Teacher: Poor home environment, lack of discipline from the home and school.

3. How do you provide our students, staff, and community with the attitudes and skills needed to promote nonviolent solutions?

   Sheriff: Methods used to promote nonviolence include parental involvement in making school policy, extracurricular activities, and involvement of community resource persons in real-life situations.

   Assistant Principal: Support groups for children with personal problems or environmental problems, such as drug and alcohol abuse, and activities to build self-esteem, self-worth, and positive attitudes.

   Resource Teacher: I promote a nonviolent attitude by talking with my students daily about why they should not fight, telling them the consequences they will have to face. I work with the young people of my church with different programs. We have an outreach program in which we provide services in academics and recreation for the children in our community.

4. Name some programs used to eliminate violence. How are these programs designed to provide our school community with conflict-resolution skills?

   Sheriff: PTA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, Little Leagues, YMCA, YWCA, science clubs, library clubs, and athletic clubs. These organizations are involved in cooperative working relationships. Children are learning as they live and work together both during the school day and after school hours. Good social skills and good behavioral attitudes are important for their school lives and in the community.

   Assistant Principal: Support groups build self-esteem. The filmstrip series, *Someone Special Like Me*, and educational activities, such as Rules We Live By, give alternatives to violence.

Conclusion

Parents, churches, schools, neighbors, and private and government agencies will have to work together for our children. There is more violence in today's society than ever before; but there are very few role models.

Beginning at a very young age, we need to teach children basic survival skills in addition to academics. All of us must set aside time in this fast-paced society for our children.

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Students as Conflict Resolvers in Schools: Two Models that Work

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Preventing conflict is the work of politics; establishing peace is the work of education.

—Maria Montessori

In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, a high school student was shot and critically wounded during a lunchroom dispute. In Miami, a high school student was shot while waiting in front of the school for the bus. In Union, Kentucky, a 17-year-old student held his mathematics class hostage for three hours. In Dartmouth, Massachusetts, two 16-year-olds and one 15-year-old, armed with clubs and knives, barged into a high school social studies class and fatally stabbed another 16-year-old. In Reseda, California, a student shot a 17-year-old in the school hallway because the victim gave him "a funny look."

Unfortunately, these are the places that too many of our children call school. While the examples are of high school students, incidents in elementary and middle schools are on the rise. Schools, once thought of as safe havens, are rapidly becoming war zones. Robert Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center in Westlake Village, California, predicts a gloomy future: "There are two types of school administrators—those who've faced a crisis and those who are about to" (Ramsey, 1994).

In a recent newscast, it was reported that 125 youth are arrested each day for committing violent crimes. The percentage of school violence incidents between 1976 and 1991 increased each year, with the greatest increase being in non-urban areas (Smith et al., 1993). Youth are settling their differences with violence. A 1989 survey of sixth- and eighth-graders on their experiences with violence in school revealed that 50% had money or personal property stolen at least once; 32% carried a weapon to school; and 15% had physically confronted a school employee (Menacker, Weldon, & Hurwitz, 1989). Given these statistics, it is ironic that respondents to the 1993 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll on the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools identified inadequate funding as the "biggest problem" in public education. By 1994, however, the problem of inadequate funding had slipped to third place, and the public had identified fighting,

violence, and gangs along with a lack of discipline as the two biggest problems (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1993).

School districts across the country are developing "crisis plans" as responses to violent incidents in schools. The plans tend to be reactive in nature, rather than proactive. While school personnel cannot be held responsible for all of the violence, they must take responsibility, at least in part, for teaching students to be resourceful in handling differences. Schools are socialization institutions.

Conflict resolution is a proactive response strategy that is coming into vogue again. Teaching conflict-resolution skills in schools is not a new idea. During the 1970s, the National Training Laboratory provided training materials for schools to teach conflict resolution as well as team building, seeking consensus, and problem solving.

Why Is Conflict Resolution Needed in Schools?

Conflicts arise out of interdependence when the actions and needs of one group or person negatively affect the actions and needs of another group or person. However, it is because of this interdependence that conflicts have to be resolved.

Conflicts occur in everyone's life. Conflicts occur in our homes, at our places of employment, and even in our religious organizations. Out of conflict can come new and prosocial ideas, knowledge, and understandings. The Civil Rights movement and the destruction of the Berlin Wall are two historical examples of the result of positive conflict. Negative conflict, on the other hand, produces antisocial behaviors that are exhibited through intolerance, resentment, lack of self-control, and groundless violence.

It is the responsibility of teachers and counselors to resolve negative conflict in schools and classrooms in order to maintain peace and order. Conflict resolution does not try to eliminate incidents of confrontation in schools. Instead, the goals are to reduce conflicts and to assist students in effectively handling situations in which conflicts occur. Conflict resolution is the creative and constructive application of skills that enhance interpersonal relationships and positively reinforce human interdependence.

It has been our experience that many educators either do not have the skills for conflict resolution or may not possess enough skill to teach conflict resolution to students. The key to effective conflict resolution curricula in schools is

trained school staff who (1) believe that the skills are necessary, (2) see resolving conflict as a professional responsibility, (3) are committed to students having the skills, and (4) model those skills in their own interactions.

The Stages of Conflict Resolution and Curricular Approaches

There are four stages in a conflict resolution model: (1) awareness, (2) self-preparation, (3) conflict management, and (4) negotiation (Katz & Lawyer, 1993). At the awareness stage, an individual or group is conscious "of the negative emotional states in a conflict" (p. 32). The key to the self-preparation stage is separating the people from the problem and determining the desired outcomes expected from settling the conflict. At the conflict management stage, negative emotions are defused to enable involved parties to clarify and understand similarities and differences. Finally, in the negotiation stage, disputing parties "achieve a mutually agreed-on outcome with respect to their differences" (p. 36).

Conflict resolution can take one of three approaches: teacher as facilitator, counselor as facilitator, or student/peer as facilitator. Teacher-facilitated conflict resolution is teacher-centered; the role of students is passive. This approach makes it possible for teachers to train the entire class in conflict resolution. Conflict resolution is taught as a subject area, like math or science. The amount of time allocated to the subject depends on the teacher, and teachers must stop instruction to address conflicts in the classroom. The skills are taught through simulations and structured experiences. Because teacher-student confidentiality is nonexistent, the success of this approach depends on students' level of trust in the teacher. In addition, the students' ability to transfer the skills to real-world situations depends, in large part, on the experience and skills of the teacher.

The counselor-centered approach places conflict resolution in the hands of professionals who are trained to help others explore their feelings about interpersonal relationships. Students are taken from their classes for a designated period of time to work with the counselor. The students who participate with the counselor have been identified as exhibiting dysfunctional attitudes, disruptive behaviors, and unwanted outcomes. This makes the approach appear to be more reactive than proactive. Counselors can act as mediators when there are conflicts between teachers and students or between students and students. Counselors can teach alternative ways to deal with conflict. Two drawbacks of this approach are (1) due to other administrative duties and school crises, counselors may have to postpone conflict-resolution sessions, and thus the conflict

could be exacerbated, and (2) counselors do not have a student's frame of reference concerning a conflict situation.

The final approach, students as facilitators, recognizes that students can be involved actively and responsibly in solving problems in the school. This approach also acknowledges and considers the shared nomenclature among students. According to Myrick (1987), there are four helping roles student facilitators can play. As "special assistants," students assist teachers and counselors in aiding other students to adjust and adapt to the school environment. "Tutors" assist students with their studying and their interpersonal skills. "Special friends" are students who are paired with other students to provide encouragement and support regarding personal and social matters that interfere with learning and school. Finally, "small-group leaders" are trained in group-process skills to assist students in understanding the conditions of relationships and interaction, such as understanding, acceptance, and tolerance. Students' responsible participation is a major incentive for the success in resolving conflicts in school. The success of this approach relies on a cadre of students being trained to master the necessary skills and on the support of school administrators and teachers. In elementary schools through high schools, the student-as-facilitator approach increasingly is being employed more often than the other two approaches.

Two Conflict Resolution School Programs

The two conflict resolution programs presented here are examples of the student-as-facilitator approach. A few program outcomes are provided. The Student Leadership Academy was designed, developed, and implemented by Jackson as a project component of the Institute for Effective Integrated Education at Ohio State University. Hines, a middle school counselor and TRUST specialist in Dade County, Florida, describes the Peer Helper program that he adapted from the Reach Ultimate Success Together (TRUST) program.

Student Leadership Academy. The Student Leadership Academy was implemented in middle, junior high, and high schools in Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio. Student alienation from the life of schools, low student achievement, and high dropout rates were seen as the causes of student conflicts in the schools. The academy was a planned, proactive effort to provide a total school program that includes a systematic method of involving students in school life.

When the schools' staff and students completed surveys to identify school problems, both groups identified the same school problems: unclear school goals

and expectations, student alienation, staff disfranchisement, and community isolation.

During the year prior to implementing the academy, intensive and extensive training was conducted for all the adults in the school, certified and noncertified. A variety of training approaches was used. School staff received formal training in the knowledge, skills, and processes for addressing Wayson et al.'s (1982) eight characteristics of effective schools. This was done to ensure that adults in the school at least would have knowledge of what was going to be taught to the students. The optimal expectation was that such training would produce adults who believed in, were committed to, and would support student involvement to turn their schools around. Adult training continued during the second year of the academy.

When individuals first are given the opportunity to share in solving problems and making decisions, their initial reaction usually is apprehension, anxiety, and skepticism. The academy's student training provided a systematic means of teaching the skills necessary for students to assume responsible roles. The following guidelines were used:

1. Student training had support from the administration. Administrators attended *all* of the training sessions to have firsthand knowledge of what transpired. Such actions conveyed to students that the adults valued the learning and that students would be allowed to solve problems.

2. Adult trainers were trained in the skills to be taught before they worked with students. This training was designed to help them thoroughly understand the goals and processes to be used.

3. Student training was started with a cross-section of students. The group was mixed by age, grade, race, and sex. Both formal and informal, positive and negative student leaders were included. One school principal involved in the initial academy commented that "if you ask them to participate in responsible endeavors, even the worst thugs often do." Grade points, attendance, and disciplinary actions were not criteria for selection.

4. Initial training experiences took place in an external, weekend, overnight training session. Removing the initial training from the school setting facilitated the idea of equality. Neither school staff nor students were seen as superior over the other; and neither was seen as more, or less, responsible for making the training sessions a success.

5. Teacher participation in the initial training was voluntary. Many teachers did not readily embrace the idea of responsible student involvement. To have mandated teacher involvement at the initial stage would have set up the program to fail.

6. Training involved both "fun" activities and difficult, challenging ones. Activities included team building, skill development, and creation of concrete, written action plans that indicated personal commitment on the part of individuals. Students were given real, difficult tasks to do and were held accountable for accomplishing them. Each activity focused on skill development or a *real* problem.

7. Minimal initial resources were provided. Giving staff and students too much money to accomplish such a purpose would reinforce their dependence and erode their commitment to the larger goal. Solving the problem of getting resources—or going on without them—made the task "real" and solidified support for its accomplishment. The success of achieving against the odds sweetens the rewards of doing so.

The student training provided major benefits both for students and the schools. The goals established for student training set the tone for the Student Leadership Academy. These goals, which promoted inclusion, support, and challenge, created a positive program climate that extended to the entire school climate.

As a result of their action plans, students developed and implemented several projects to solve school problems. It is important to note that students and adults independently identified many of the same problems. In doing so, both groups were able to share mutual concerns and widen the spectrum of the problems addressed.

As a reminder, the students involved in the academy were in middle, junior high, and senior high schools. The following is just a sample of the projects where students took initiative and demonstrated leadership and responsible behavior.

1. Students established an in-school suspension program in a middle school.

2. Students served as hall monitors to reduce theft. In one high school, locker thefts were reduced 90% in one month.

3. Students taught a staff development session, showing the junior high and high school staffs the kinds of games that students play with staff members.

4. Students assumed leadership roles in the middle school human relationship activities and sessions.

5. Students created a student handbook to acquaint all students with school rules and individual responsibility in the junior high school.

Peer Helpers Model. Peer Helpers is adopted from the TRUST program. The TRUST program is a student assistance program designed to address the needs and problems of students to promote positive actions and attitudes. In the TRUST program, students are trained to be effective listeners, group leaders, and role models for their peers. The peer facilitation component of the TRUST program is designed to provide students with a unique opportunity to help others through a process of peer facilitation.

Hines' Peer Helpers came out of an intervention model. The middle school in which he works is multilingual and multicultural—including African-American, Cuban, Haitian, and white students. A majority of the student conflicts are grounded in the different cultural and language characteristics of the school. The school's Peer Helpers program is designed to foster a sense of belongingness in all students by acknowledging and appreciating differences while building on similarities.

The program has three objectives: (1) to provide student facilitators with a realization of self and others, (2) to give student facilitators training in the peer-facilitation process, and (3) to equip student facilitators with the skills for managing responsible behavior and implementing the peer-facilitation process.

Establishing the Peer Helpers program required care, planning, commitment, and zeal on the part of the program coordinator and the students. The program coordinator was trained in conflict resolution and peer facilitation. Because support from the school administrators, guidance services, and instructional staff was critical, that support was secured early in the development of the program.

Students selected for facilitation training have demonstrated potential leadership ability and have personalities suited for forming helping relationships and being trainable. Recommendations of possible student candidates are made by teachers and parents.

Facilitation training sessions are held once a week with the counselor. Training focuses on facilitation concepts and skills. When the training is completed, student facilitators identify projects on which to work. Weekly debriefing sessions are held with the counselor to assess progress on individual projects and the overall program.

The Peer Helpers program is a success in this middle school. The success is attributed to student involvement and is evident through the results of student projects:

1. Student conflicts, violence, and suspensions decreased. The decrease resulted in fewer students being assigned to alternative school programs.
2. Students state an appreciation for having a forum for open dialogue with peers in which they can safely vent and express their concerns.
3. Students report an increased appreciation for the cultures represented in the school population.
4. Students conduct workshops on self-esteem, relationships, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancy.
5. Adults in the school report observe students using constructive and nonviolent methods to resolve conflict and using effective communication skills.

Assumptions about Students and Their Responsible Participation in Schools

Both of these conflict resolution programs are based on the premise that students can and will be responsible participants in school life if they are given the appropriate guidance and training. Individuals who continually are denied input into decisions and activities that directly affect them take little or no responsibility for what happens to them or around them. This lack of involvement may contribute to a sense of alienation and result in disruptive behavior.

There are five assumptions about students and schools that affect the relationship between student participation and student responsibility.

Assumption 1: Much of the culture of a school, particularly the underground or tacit culture, is determined by the students. Changing that culture requires working *with* students. Students' marginal status in schools results in a lack of belongingness, and this student alienation causes many of the problems in public schools. Many schools have staff members (sometimes a majority of

staff members) who believe that many students do not belong in the school. These attitudes toward students reflect the old joke, "We would have a good school if these students were not here." Unfortunately, the norms that govern most school operations perpetuate that "joke" (Wayson et al., 1988).

Assumption 2: Students can and will perform responsible roles in schools to which they belong. Teachers and administrators exhibit much distrust of students' abilities to assume responsible roles in the day-to-day life of the school. The student role tends to be perceived as childish, inferior, irresponsible, and passive. Participation in the operations and management of the school instills in students a sense that they belong.

Assumption 3: A key to responsible, self-disciplined participation is a sense of belongingness, involvement, and ownership. These have reciprocal and mutual relations. It takes time and effort to teach students to be self-disciplined. Staff may desire student involvement but fail to consider the planning and structure necessary to ensure that this involvement is obtained and used in meaningful ways. The skills students need to take active roles in the school should be taught in incremental steps. Staff who believe that they cannot find the time, or that such training is not their job, need to reassess their position.

Assumption 4: Resistance to responsible participation is not inherent in teachers or students, but the roles maintained for teachers and students create the observed resistance. Teachers sense a loss of their power and fear that things will get out of control. Related to this fear is the belief that students are not responsible enough to take ownership for their behavior. As students begin to feel that they also own the school, the relationship between staff and students changes from one of power to one of influence and reasoning.

Assumption 5: Students respond to the same dynamics that influence staff. A positive student body may be developed using the same methods that a school principal uses to create cohesion among the faculty. The methods include team building, opportunity for input in important decisions, and a perception of fulfilling valued and responsible roles. The same dynamics prevail for students.

Conclusion

Effective conflict resolution curricula demonstrate that the school is a social system in which all parts are interdependent. Causes for problems usually reside in this complex social system, and it is only through addressing those causes that long-lasting solutions can be reached. Students do well academically, socially,

and emotionally in schools where they actively participate in and play responsible roles.

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Critical Thinking as a Conflict Resolution Strategy

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Introduction

Our society is the most technologically advanced in history. We have traveled to the moon, medical advances have prolonged life, and computer technology has changed work and play. Ironically, in the midst of this great revolution in new knowledge and possibilities, we still are beset with some very basic, yet profound, problems. Many of these problems center on our education institutions. Two of these basic problems are the questionable ability of our students to think critically and to solve problems and the tremendous rise of violence and discipline problems in the schools.

Educators, policymakers, parents, and the general public have come to realize that today's students do not perform effectively at critical thinking. For example, Silver (1986) reported that nationwide testing by the National Assessment of Educational Progress reports instances of students approaching academic tasks in a robot-like manner, without much thought about what they are doing. *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) highlighted the belief that deficiencies in higher-level thinking are a major debility in American education.

Opportunities for using critical thinking occur outside the school, too. However, the task of preparing students to use their capacity as thinkers should take place in the classrooms of America. And to maximize the opportunities for learning, the classroom must be a place where degenerative conflict and discipline problems are limited.

Critical Thinking

There are a number of definitions of critical thinking. Mayfield (1991) conceives of thinking as consciously observing, analyzing, reasoning, and evaluating according to a standard. Lipman (1988) argues that critical thinking is responsible, reflexive, sensitive to context, and self-corrective. Several theorists define

critical thinking as the development of logical reasoning abilities, assumption hunting, and the testing of meaning (Hallet, 1984; Hullfish and Smith, 1961; Scriven, 1976). For Beyer (1985) it is the process of determining the authenticity, accuracy and worth of information or knowledge claims. Marazano et al. (1988) identify five dimensions of thinking: metacognition, critical and creative thinking, thinking process, core thinking skills, and the relationship of content area knowledge to thinking.

The development and usefulness of the ability to think critically has been accepted as a worthwhile educational objective for quite some time. In 1896, John Dewey discussed the value of critical thinking in one of his papers on education. In 1947, the President's Commission on Higher Education emphasized critical thinking; and one of its objectives for science in general education was to teach students to understand the common phenomena in their physical environment, to apply habits of scientific thought to both personal and civic problems, and to appreciate the implications of scientific discoveries for human welfare.

Perhaps the most important reason for teaching critical thinking is that people in our society must make difficult and complex decisions on a daily basis. The ability to think critically is needed to make good decisions about a variety of political, social, and personal issues that have far-reaching consequences. The destiny of the Earth may lie in the ability of our teachers and schools to develop students who are able to think critically.

Although the need to teach critical thinking is recognized, a lower level of teaching and learning is prevalent. This low level of learning is the result of didactic teaching and the emphasis on students exhibiting proficiency in recalling what teachers or textbooks say are the correct answers.

Critical thinking will be a priority in the classroom only when it also is valued by building administrators, central office staff, school boards, legislators, and the general public. When teachers acquire the theoretical basis and skills to teach critical thinking, they will inspire students to read, write, speak, and listen critically. Students will be able to examine information for its reliability, precision, and authenticity; they will become active researchers and constructors of knowledge, rather than mere receptors of knowledge.

Integrating Critical Thinking and Conflict Resolution Strategies: An Infusion Model

There also are several definitions of conflict. However, the behavioral problem of interest to us is students' inability to get along with each other. This problem is the focus of our infusion model. When teachers can "infuse" the methods of critical thinking into all subjects, then instruction will be more meaningful and more effective for students. As teachers continue to teach from a critical-thinking perspective, their students eventually will respond and act as critical thinkers. This will enable students to become better and more productive students. In addition, it will empower students with the critical-thinking abilities that can be used to resolve conflicts.

For any innovation to have a chance of succeeding, initial training must be provided. If critical thinking is to be infused throughout the curriculum, interactive staff development must focus on three phases: the domains of critical thinking, a lesson-plan approach, and active and continuous monitoring of lessons by teachers.

Inservice programs on the domains of critical thinking will provide teachers with the theoretical base for critical thinking, as well as an introduction to the skills and strategies needed to infuse critical thinking throughout the curriculum. The second phase, the lesson-plan approach, allows teachers to practice incorporating critical thinking strategies while engaging in an activity in which they already are very competent, that is, developing lesson plans.

Using lesson plans for staff development can be a powerful tool. It is an activity that is very basic to teaching. It also emphasizes close examination and assessment of what is taught on a daily basis. In addition, it provides a means of cooperative learning for teachers, and it avoids "recipe" solutions to instruction.

The third phase, the active and continuous monitoring of lesson plans, transforms teaching as teachers develop and their critical insights and skills mature. Teachers who master the art of critiquing their lesson plans will reform the curriculum and develop their teaching skills.

When the classrooms become more relevant to the real world, students will be encouraged and rewarded for using their critical-thinking skills to solve both academic and personal problems. Some of the specific skills that enable students to be better students include intellectual responsibility, intellectual curiosity, intellectual perseverance, and using the elements of reasoning. These skills will

help students identify assumptions and consider alternative points of view. These are important skills for successfully resolving conflicts.

Peer mediation is a way of using critical thinking to negotiate disputes and to find resolutions that meet students' needs. For peer mediation to be successful, critical-thinking skills must be part of the process in three areas: training the trainers, training the peer mediators, and implementing and running the program.

Care must be taken in training the trainers. A number of staff persons must go through extensive inservice training in critical thinking, conflict resolution, and peer-mediation procedures. The topics covered in this training should include an overview of the basic theory of critical thinking and conflict, the role of peer mediators, the steps in the mediation process, and the selection and training of peer mediators.

Critical-thinking skills also are an important part of the training for peer mediators. The peer mediator's most important responsibility is to create and maintain a climate conducive to problem solving. To build trust and cooperation, the mediator must use the following critical-thinking skills:

1. *The peer mediator must have an intellectual sense of justice.* The peer mediator must be open to all viewpoints and must assess them with the same intellectual standards, without consideration for his or her own feelings and vested interests or those of friends.

2. *The peer mediator must have intellectual empathy.* Mediators must understand the need to put themselves in the place of others in order to genuinely understand them. They must recognize their tendencies to identify truth with their own perceptions. Intellectual empathy is necessary for the mediator to accurately reconstruct the viewpoint of each disputant and to reason from premises, assumptions, and ideas other than the mediator's own.

3. *The mediator must display intellectual civility.* Mediators must grant respect and full attention to the views, perceptions, and inferences of others. Intellectual civility is not a matter of courtesy; rather, it is the knowledge that communication requires honoring other's views and their capacity to reason.

4. *The mediator must have intellectual humility.* The mediator must be aware of his or her intellectual limits. One's sense of power as a mediator must never become a factor in the remediation process.

5. *The mediator must exhibit intellectual faith in reason.* The mediator encourages the people in conflict to come to their own conclusions through their own rational faculties. Mediators must have faith that people can think for themselves, form rational viewpoints, draw reasonable conclusions, think coherently and logically, persuade others by reason, and become reasonable despite their conflict.

6. *The mediator must have intellectual autonomy and courage.* Intellectual autonomy and courage entails a commitment to analyze and evaluate beliefs on the basis of reason and evidence, to question when it is rational to question, to believe when it is rational to believe, and to conform when it is rational to conform.

Critical-thinking skills will be important for all students when the peer mediation program has been implemented. The ways in which students choose to respond to conflict will determine the success of the program. There are three basic ways in which students can choose to respond to conflict: avoidance, confrontation, or communication. When students choose to avoid conflict, their basic needs still go unmet. When they choose confrontation, there can be no mutually satisfying solutions because someone wins and someone loses. However, choosing communication opens the door to positive solutions.

When students voluntarily choose peer mediation as the means of resolving their conflicts, the program succeeds. Those persons who are in conflict will have accepted the ground rules, including using critical thinking to come to a resolution of their conflict.

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Resolving School Conflicts through Appropriate Multicultural Education Programs

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Multicultural education programs can be used effectively to defuse school conflicts. Multicultural programs have been used in our schools to teach cognitive and academic skills; and many of these programs can be designed to teach human relations skills and to show students how to resolve their conflicts without resorting to violence. Children who learn to solve conflicts without violence will learn skills that can aid them throughout their school years and later as adults in a culturally diverse society.

Violence includes more than just physical conflict. Indeed, the "mental violence" inflicted on individuals or groups is more pervasive and devastating to our society. Examples of mental violence are racism, sexual harassment, and dis-

crimination. These types of violence do more damage to the esteem and lives of more people than do individuals with assault weapons. While the media daily depict the physical violence in our society, we must remember that dehumanizing and negative stereotypes are the worst form of violence.

The learning environment can have a tremendous impact on a child's development. Studies have shown that dividing a class to work on assignments in small racially and ethnically diverse groups fosters mutual interdependence and interest in a common goal and can help minimize conflict (Hopson et al., 1993). Because many conflicts are caused by the inability of people to recognize the worth or perspectives of others, education programs that show the diversity and worth of all cultures can be an effective tool in minimizing school conflict. Teaching respect for the differences of others and teaching how to mediate conflict and misunderstanding should be a primary undertaking for educators.

Although multicultural education can serve as a tool for defusing school conflict, it has not been used comprehensively in schools. Most attempts at multicultural education have resulted in only general guidelines, bibliographic listings, or a sample of activities (Duhon-Sells, 1991; Duhon-Sells, 1992). Most curriculum guides have been reserved for special occasions and are intended for selected student populations, instead of being systematically integrated throughout the curricula (Gay, 1988; Gay, 1990).

The techniques developed for multicultural education can improve communication among members of different cultures, and improved communication is necessary if conflicts are to be resolved. Problems seldom exist only on the level at which they are expressed. But a problem well-stated is a problem half-solved.

To be most effective, multicultural education must be combined with training in conflict resolution. There are many innovative techniques to help children solve conflicts in the classroom (Abrams & Schmidt, 1974; Judson, 1977). Many of the most effective of these techniques emphasize communication and getting students to understand the other person's point of view.

One example is the listening chair/speaking chair model. In this model, one chair is labeled as the "listening chair" and the other as the "speaking chair." When two children have a problem, the one who sits in the listening chair must listen quietly while the child in the speaking chair explains the problem. Both children understand that they each will have an equal turn to sit in the speaking

chair. This model of resolving conflict has been used to improve social tolerance and race understanding among students of different cultural backgrounds.

Multicultural education also can help students overcome the hopelessness that often leads to violent behavior. Students misbehave because they are trapped by their reputations. They want out, but do not see a way. If we could look beyond their upside-down, backward, and smart talk, we might see a person quite willing to change (Hopson et al., 1993).

Educators should understand that students often do not intend to be disruptive or disrespectful. Some children misbehave because of poor eyesight, lack of sleep, hearing problems, hunger, and other serious problems. Most unmet needs can keep one from being civil. Often, the most serious unmet need is a sense of self-worth.

Schools should provide an education that gives all students a sense of self-worth. This education must go beyond "food, facts, and fun." It should be more than just a "tourist curriculum." Schools routinely must celebrate the accomplishments and features of all cultures. The various threads of our national fabric should be presented to all students on a daily basis (Hopson et al., 1993).

Many students do not see the future bringing anything better than the hopelessness they experience now. We need to help these students understand that they are the creators of their own happiness, that freedom comes with self-discipline, and that they have the freedom to choose their futures. Students need to see that disagreements do not need to be settled with violence. Instead, disagreements can be positive opportunities to learn about themselves, to develop their strengths, and to build deeper and more productive relationships with others.

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Restoring Human Dignity: A Model for Prevention and Intervention

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Schools across the nation are experiencing dramatic increases in violent crimes. Violence affects students' general sense of well-being and self-confidence and hinders their ability to learn and achieve their full potential. This must stop. Schools should be places where students feel physically and personally safe.

Teachers, administrators, and counselors are involved with students at some of the most delicate and intimate decision-making points of their lives. Their positions give them the power to affirm students' worth and dignity or to do students great harm. During these opportunities, school personnel can help students enhance or restore their psychological and spiritual well-being.

No longer can educators make assumptions regarding how students are supported by their families, their beliefs in the value of school, their appropriate behavior based on gender, and their equality (Keeling, 1994). This poses new challenges for educators as they assess the needs of students and work to reduce violence. However, educators first must "own" the problem of violence on the campus and express a sincere commitment to addressing the problem (Whitaker, 1993).

Taking a Stand: What Administrators Can Do

Administrators have a real opportunity to prevent violence. Administrators first should publicly acknowledge that assaults, gang violence, fights, hate crimes, homicides, relationship violence, stalking, etc., occur on campus and should state clearly that such behavior will not be tolerated. They must ensure that adequate funds are allocated for implementing programs and disseminating information. In addition, the school should have a task force or coalition with decision-making abilities to oversee violence-related efforts on campus, as well as to provide support to the administration.

Depending on the level of violence, a school may hire a violence reduction/victim services coordinator. This person must be knowledgeable and experienced in issues of violence, diversity, multiculturalism, crisis intervention, and victim advocacy. The coordinator should monitor all cases of violence and provide support both for victims and alleged perpetrators. To ensure the coordinator's effectiveness, that person should serve as chair of the school's task force on violence.

The following specific suggestions are made for administrators:

1. Identify what behaviors constitute violence and publish and distribute clear definitions of those behaviors.
2. State clearly that such behaviors are condemned by your school.
3. Provide information regarding the circumstances in which campus violence commonly occurs.
4. State that the policy relates to all members of the campus community, including visitors.
5. Outline the procedure for reporting violent crime.
6. Inform potential perpetrators that they may be liable through the campus regulations, as well as civilly and criminally liable for their acts.
7. Provide the protocol for how campus administrators will respond to reports of violent crime.
8. Outline the process for handling cases.
9. Disseminate the policy to all students, staff, and faculty. Use every available medium to disseminate the policy. Include print media, such as newspapers,

pamphlets, flyers, and posters; a computer-accessible information system; and nonprint media, such as films, songs, videos, television, etc.

Taking a Stand: What Counselors Can Do

Victims as well as perpetrators of violent crimes need the attention of counselors. Counselors first should establish a comprehensive array of services for assisting victims. Specific suggestions include

1. Making counseling referrals to providers trained specifically in violence issues. These services should be free of charge.
2. Providing support groups for both the victim and those close to the victim.
3. Establishing support groups for students who already have survived violence before arriving on campus.
4. Establishing a rapid response team to mobilize in the event of a violent crime.

Counselors should establish programs to educate and rehabilitate perpetrators of violent crimes. These programs should be conducted in conjunction with discipline or punishment, which will minimize the likelihood of future violent behavior. The first phase of such a project would be mandating an open-ending, revolving curriculum for perpetrators of violence. The perpetrators could start in the program at any point, and they would attend until the curriculum is completed. Topics should include the escalating cycle of violence, anger-reduction techniques, definition of abuse and violence, and male and female gender roles and how they relate to violence. The second phase of the program would be voluntary psychotherapy for those who wish to enter this form of treatment. The psychotherapy also should be provided free of charge.

Taking a Stand: What Teachers Can Do

Teachers play a very vital role in the behavior of students. Active participation on the teacher's part in promoting peace in the classroom and on campus is extremely important. However, just telling students how to avoid being victimized will not stop school violence. Teachers should plan classes on violence that are both informational and interactive. Teachers could maximize the opportunities for skills-building by using an improvisational, interactive theater technique. These classes should include such topics as family dynamics, elements of a healthy relationship, the psychology of victimization, anger management, con-

flict resolution, assertiveness training, stress management, communications skills, alcohol and other drug abuse, definitions and expressions of power, etc. The classes should address issues of sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, ageism, ableism, classism, "weightism," "lookism," etc., which are underlying causes of violence.

And teachers should discuss violence on a continuum (for example, sexual harassment to rape, prejudice to hate crime, negative body image to eating disorder, low self-esteem to suicide, etc.). Because athletes are involved in a disproportionately greater number of violent crimes, both as perpetrators and as victims, be sure to include them in the planning, implementation, sponsorship, and evaluation programs (Parrot et al., 1994). Such projects will attract larger audiences and have a greater impact. Teachers and students also may be involved in the following:

1. Conducting research to determine the needs and priorities of the campus. Use surveys, focus groups, and both qualitative and quantitative data.
2. Providing information to students about what constitutes the different types of violent behaviors.
3. Building a repertoire of different educational programs. These could include
    a. Programs specifically for boys. Discuss how men are hurt by violence and how men can prevent violence.
    b. Programs specifically for girls. Address how females contribute to the culture of violence. Discuss ways in which females can heal from violence and better support each other.
    c. Programs for mixed gender groups. Explore how to improve communication across genders.
4. Making violence awareness seminars a mandatory requirement for students applying to become a part of student organizations.
5. Using peer leaders, especially males, to conduct programs.
6. Including violence awareness in new-student orientation programs.
7. Incorporating readings and discussions about violence into classes.

Taking a Stand: What Parents Can Do

Parental involvement is a key factor in violence reduction programs. The following are recommendations that parents should consider:

1. Parents must accept responsibility for seeking information from schools concerning violence.
2. Policies and procedures dealing with violent acts should be reviewed by parents.
3. Parents should participate in prevention and intervention programs for all children.
4. Parents should allocate time to help at school or afterschool functions and sporting events.
5. Parents must commit themselves to display positive behavior for their children to model.
6. Parents should encourage their children to develop a sense of mutual responsibility and to watch out for one another at social events. Replace the *laissez-faire* mentality with an attitude of proactive prevention.
7. Parents should encourage acceptance and tolerance for differences among people.
8. Parents should assist children in understanding definitions of violent behavior and explain what is unacceptable at school and in society.
9. Parents could establish a security/safety task force.

Miedzian (1991) stated that "people who live in violent societies tend to assume that high levels of violence are acceptable: Now that we have hopefully been cured of this mistaken belief, we shall focus attention on what can be done to make our society less violent." If educators, parents, and the community work together and make a commitment to do what can be done, they can stop the plague of violence pervading our schools and society.

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Reducing School Violence: Resources to Assist Teachers

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Programs

Programs to assist teachers in the process of reducing violence in their schools and maintaining a safe and healthy environment have been developed and implemented throughout the nation. Some of these are listed below.

1. Cambridge Ridge and Latin High School's Student Mediation Program, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138; (617) 349-6772. Contact person: John Silva.

2. Children's Creative Response to Conflict, Box 271, 521 North Broadway, Nyack, NY 10960; (914) 353-1796.

3. Commanday Peacemaking Institute Corporation, 7 Greenfield Terrace; Congers, NY 10920-2606; (914) 268-4420.

4. Community Board Program, 1540 Market Street, Room 490, San Francisco, CA 94102; (415) 552-1250.

5. Dispute Management in the Schools Project, Hawaii State Department of Education, 2530 Tenth Avenue, Building A, Honolulu, HI 96818; (808) 733-9108. Contact person: Carl Takeshita.

6. Gang Awareness Resource Program, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office, 4700 Ramona Boulevard, Monterey Park, CA 91754-2169.

7. International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, Box 53, Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027; (212) 678-3402.

8. Paramount Plan: Alternatives to Gang Membership, Human Services Department, City of Paramount, 16400 Colorado Avenue, Paramount, CA 90723; (213) 531-3503.

9. Prepare Curriculum, edited by Arnold P. Goldstein, Research Press, 2612 North Mattis Avenue, Champaign, IL 61821; (217) 352-3273.

10. Preventive Programs, Chicago Police Department, Bureau of Community Services, 1121 South State Street, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 744-5490.

11. Safe Schools Coalition, Inc., 5351 Gulf Drive, P.O. Box 1338; Holmes Beach, FL 34218; (813) 778-9140.

12. Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum, Committee for Children, 172 20th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122; (800) 634-4449.

13. School Initiatives Program, Community Board Center for Policy and Training, 1540 Market Street, Suite 490, San Francisco, CA 94102; (415) 552-1250.

14. SERVE, the Southeastern Regional Vision for Education, 345 South Magnolia, Suite D-23, Tallahassee, FL 32301-2950; (800) 352-6001.

15. STAR, Straight Talk About Risks, Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, Education Division, 1225 Eye Street N.W., Room 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 289-7319.

16. Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents, developed by Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Health, 150 Treemont, Boston, MA 02111; (800) 225-4276. Contact person: Millie LeBonc.

17. Violence Prevention Project, Health Promotion Program for Urban Youth, 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Second Floor, Boston, MA 02118; (617) 534-5196. Contact person, Joann Taupier.

18. Violence Prevention Education Project, Bowie State University, M.L.K. Building, Room 0216, Bowie, MD 20175; (301) 464-7707.

19. Youth Violence Council, P.O. Box 104, Lancaster, PA 17608; (717) 392-6343.

Organizations

The following organizations can provide more information about school violence:

1. American Bar Association, Section of Dispute Resolution, 2nd Floor Lobby, 1800 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 331-2258.

2. America Bar Association, Special C Youth Education for Citizenship, 541 North Fairbanks Court, Chicago, IL 60611-3314; (312) 988-5735. Contact person: Paula Nessel.

3. Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; (800) 370-2515.

4. National Association for Mediation in Education (NAME), 425 Amity Street, Amherst, MA 01002; (413) 545-2462.

5. National Crime Prevention Council, 1700 K Street, N.W., Second Floor, Washington, D.C. 20006; (202) 466-6272.

6. National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, 712 West Lombard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201; (410) 706-5170.

7. National School Safety Center, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA 90265; (818) 377-6200.

8. Task Force on Violent Crime, Rockefeller Building, Suite 300, 416 Superior Avenue, N.W., Cleveland, OH 44113; (216) 781-2944.

9. Violence in the Schools and How America's School Boards Are Safeguarding Your Children, National School Boards Association, Office of Federal and National Education Issues Advocacy, 1680 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 838-6722.

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